

R E L I G I O N

CONSIDERED AS THE ONLY BASIS OF

H A P P I N E S S

AND OF

T R U E P H I L O S O P H Y.

A WORK written for the INSTRUCTION of the
CHILDREN of his Most Serene Highness

THE DUKE OF ORLEANS;

And in which the PRINCIPLES of modern pretended
PHILOSOPHERS are laid open and refuted.

B Y

Madame the Marchioness of SILLERY,

HERETOFORE COUNTESS OF GENLIS.

“ Il y a dans les maximes de L'Evangile une noblesse
“ et une élévation où les cœurs vils et rampans ne sauroi-
“ ent atteindre. La Religion, qui fait les grandes ames,
“ ne paroît faite que pour elles; et il faut être grand, ou
“ le devenir, pour être Chrétien.”

Maffillon, second Dimanche du petit Carême, *sur
le respect que les Grands doivent à la Religion.*

“ There is in the maxims of the Gospel a nobleness, an
“ élévation, which base and servile souls cannot attain.
“ Religion, which forms great minds, appears to be made
“ for them alone; and it is necessary to be great, or to
“ become so, to be a Christian.”

I N T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

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C H A P. XVI.

FALSEHOODS, CONTRADICTIONS, INSINCERITY, IN-
CONSEQUENCE, &c. OF THE DETRACTERS OF
RELIGION.

INCONSEQUENCE and contradiction are the most certain marks of error or of imposture; and it is universally acknowledged, that the philosophical works of the present age offer, in every page, evident proofs of the falsity of the principles which they are meant to establish. Philosophers have been so frequently convicted of contradicting each other, that it was impossible they should not confess it; but, being willing to take advantage of this inconvenience of their doctrine, they have pretended that these contradictions proved at least that they did not form a *particular sect* in the state. 'If we were united,' said they, 'by a secret association, we should be all of one opinion, we should have one system only.' No: that harmony cannot exist but among those who maintain the cause of truth. Virtuous philosophers, who made
the

the maxims of the Gospel the basis of their morality, Fenelon, Nicole, Pascal, Abbadie, Maffillon, Addison, Clarke, Richardson, &c. formed no sect: born in different countries or times, they could not communicate to each other their ideas; yet they were of the same opinion; their pure and sublime morality is founded upon the same principles; it presents no inconsequences nor contradictions. Pretended modern philosophers could neither understand each other nor act in concert; where truth is wanting, order, harmony, regularity, and unity of plan, are never found. Brilliant talents, great success, fortune, and the spirit of cabal and intrigue, gave M. de Voltaire a dazzling authority and reputation: his irreligion revolted, unhappily, but a very small part of the public, and obtained him the suffrages of an infinitely more numerous class: his Epicurean morality pleased the men of the world; that pride and that vindictive humour which prompted him to defame indiscriminately, to calumniate without scruple, the objects of his hatred; that multitude of atrocious libels which have come from his pen, rendered him formidable to his adversaries, and must have inspired a fear of exciting his enmity. His docility with his partisans, the flatteries, the praises which he lavished upon them, the art of setting off to advantage talents which could not give him umbrage; all these little artifices, employed with address and perseverance, during upwards of fifty years, formed him insensibly a numerous body of admirers and enthusiasts, of which he was the adored chief for half a century; and which lost at his death the credit, power, and even the name of a *Sett*, which the public had given to it: therefore, the weaknesses, errors, and transports of M. de Voltaire, far from diminishing the *éclat* of his reputation, have only served to render it more brilliant. He has written works which will ever be admired by sensible minds and sound judgments: he has written many others unworthy of himself, but whose licence, and even obscenity, gained him the applause of all men without principles, and who have called some

of

of these abominable productions, *Les Chefs d'œuvres de leur Auteur*; as if it did not require a thousand times greater talents to write a tragedy, such as *Alzire*, or even a canto of the *Henriade*, than to compose works wherein the most monstrous extravagance of imagination is constantly permitted. If M. de Voltaire had given to the public neither his libels against his enemies, nor that infinity of volumes filled with impiety, and which wounds equally reason, fine taste, and decency, he would have certainly been greater in the eyes of equitable posterity; but he would have made less noise during his life. *Zapata—Le Violard du caucase—L'A, b, c—Le Dictionnaire philosophique—Lettres d'Amabed—Les colémacons du frere—L'Escarboutier*, &c. &c. with many other productions of this kind, as bad as they are licentious, are already in oblivion; but when they appeared, they found approvers. The partisans of M. de Voltaire exclaimed, in boasting of these dull performances, that the author had an *inexhaustible gaiety*; and, notwithstanding the fatiguing and constant repetition of the same ideas—*notwithstanding the obscenity of the expressions, and rudeness of the injuries, the multitude repeated the eulogiums lavished by the cabal*; whilst people of sense and refinement, whose number is always very small, were afflicted by seeing a great man make use of loose buffooneries, and degrade, at once, by such writings, both his talents and his character.

Can it be conceived, that M. de Voltaire, in speaking of his enemies, has permitted himself to lavish, in every page, the epithets of *beggar, insect, rabble*; that he has called M. de Pompignan a *fool**, and J. J. Rousseau a *black-guard*? without speaking of the extravagant calumnies with which he has been willing to blacken them. Is it conceivable, that he has a thousand times demeaned himself, by reproaching some of

* Mons. de Pompignan was the author of many celebrated works, which will live when Mons. de Voltaire's will be forgotten; especially those in which he abused his friends, and those of whom he was jealous; which was the case with Mons. de Pompignan.

his adversaries with *dying with hunger in garrets*? Is it worthy of a philosopher to pride himself upon his riches, and to shew, for the want of fortune, that contempt which is only due to vice? Such reproaches cannot humiliate him who receives them; they disgrace the writer only, who unites to so much insolence such revolting inhumanity and meanness. If M. de Voltaire had joined to his fortune the advantage of a distinguished birth, what would not he have said to those of his enemies who could not have proved their *nobility*? These meannesses and prejudices may, as it appears, be allied to philosophy; but religion and reason reprobate them equally. The pleasantries which are found in these same works would not have been supportable without the imposing name of their author. M. de Voltaire says, *There is no work which can please decent people, wherein decorum is not observed*. How many times, and in how many volumes, has he violated this precept*?

* As for instance, when he says, in speaking of Ezekiel, that this prophet eat human excrements (which M. de Voltaire expresses, without circumlocution, by a word too gross to be here repeated); and he adds, that the prophet spread upon his bread *such preserves*; and finally, whoever *likes the prophecies of Ezekiel deserves to breakfast with him*. I believe there are but few *honest men* to whom this kind of pleantry can be agreeable, especially when it is known that these low and disgusting raileries are the fruits of ignorance or insincerity. That which M. de Voltaire relates as a real action, came to pass but in vision; and the Hebrew words which he translates by *couvrir son pain d'excrémens* signify nothing more than to bake his bread under *des excréments desséchés*, to which fire was put. The custom, says the author *des Lettres de quelques Juifs*, of putting to this use the excrements of animals, among others, those of oxen, camels, &c. was common in the poor countries of the East; and travellers inform us, that it is still preserved among the Arabians, and in other places:—therefore the act, and the description of it, are both of them the invention of M. de Voltaire; and it is with this erudition, this truth, this sincerity, that he has joked, criticised, and attacked religion, and that he has written history.

The

The sect formed by M. de Voltaire, having no fixed principles, could not have a plan; but it had an aim, that of persuading men, and of domineering and reigning over their minds; and the means contrived to attain this were certainly dexterous and well-concerted. As truth was not sought for, it was perceived that it was impossible to establish, among philosophers, a certain conformity of principles and opinions: moreover, by leaving to each of them the liberty of producing systems conformable to his own opinion, they were able to publish a great number of works, which offered an agreeable variety, formed to please the public: it was nevertheless necessary to agree upon some principal points, which were reduced to the following:—*To attack openly religion, and to preach unlimited tolerance; to favour the passions, and especially to raise to a sublime virtue the love of independence; to excuse and authorize the weaknesses and errors of love**: moreover, they enrolled indifferently atheists and deists; but the latter were forbidden to admit punishments in another life; they were commanded to maintain, that the immortal soul cannot fail of being rewarded, and that the Supreme Being reserves even for profligates an eternal felicity. Their plan being but to please and seduce, in order to gain over the multitude, it was necessary to establish a creed so favourable to all the human passions; therefore this *philosophical dogma* was

* A system constantly followed by modern pretended philosophers, who have all of them written the most licentious books, and have propagated in their most serious and estimable works, dangerous principles, fit only to corrupt morals. It is thus that M. de Voltaire, in a national poem, in the *Henriade*, appears to doubt that the effeminacy and errors of love can irritate the Supreme Being. He says, in speaking of hell,

“ Etes vous dans ces lieux, foibles et tendres cœurs,

“ Qui livrés au plaisir et couchés sur des fleurs,

“ Sans fiel et sans fierté couleiz dans la paresse,

“ Vos inutiles jours filés par la moleste ?

HENRIADE, Chant. 7me.

How many other dangerous principles might one amadvert upon in the same poem!

looked

looked upon as the most important of all ; and whoever should have dared to deny it, even in rejecting revelation, would have been excluded from the party ; this terrible anathema would have been pronounced against him, *He is not a philosopher*. And, by the same principle, it is farther enacted, that those who should refuse to enter into the association, although treated otherways as enemies, should nevertheless be reputed *philosophers*, provided they declared their disbelief of punishments after this life *. Finally, they agreed to praise each other reciprocally, in public assemblies, in small circles, in pamphlets, in *folios*, and not to disdain any means which might be capable of augmenting the credit and reputation of the sect.

It is difficult, in intriguing, in caballing, in writing upon every subject, not to fall into the mistakes which an assiduous study, a long meditation, and a real erudition, alone can avoid. But *the philosophers* of the party counted upon the levity of the public, which examines nothing to the bottom, and which never fails to adopt errors, and false opinions, when they are presented under seducing appearances : moreover, talents are necessary to seduce, reason only is necessary to convince : the desire of amusing and pleasing got the better of that of persuading. M. de Voltaire said, *I am very willing not to be believed, provided I be read*. He has, therefore, in all his writings, made a jest of truth, with as much audacity as success. He was not learned ; and he had the weakness to attempt to deceive in this respect, and make Hebrew and Greek quotations, although he knew not a word of either of these languages, as he was himself forced to acknowledge, in his answers to the refutations of his works. He had no knowledge of the arts, and he spoke of them with-

* This is what happened to J. J. Rousseau, who would be of no party : he was hated and persecuted ; but he denied eternal punishments, and nobody refused him the title of *Philosopher*, although no man ever said more against philosophy, nor spoke with more contempt of modern philosophers.

out discernment, and even without taste, particularly of painting and music. When he pretended to attack religion by the sciences, he said nothing but absurdities, demonstrated to be such by the criticisms of the most learned physicians, chymists, naturalists, and astronomers, of the age. But who has read these critiques? In general, it is not men of the world; few people of this description would have been able to comprehend them; and almost every one agreed to believe, that a man, like M. de Voltaire, was incapable of speaking upon subjects of which he was ignorant, or of quoting works which he had never read. This is, nevertheless, what he permitted himself to do continually, during the whole course of his long and brilliant career.—Such an accusation ought to be supported by proofs; to give them all, would be to write volumes; I will therefore confine myself to a few striking examples, with which that highly estimable and veridical author *Des Lettres de quelques Juifs* will furnish me. M. de Voltaire has written, *That all the researches made upon the spot, by the learned Hyde, confirm us, that the traditions and books of the Persians destroy that which we learn in holy writ of Abraham**;—and the learned Hyde thought precisely the contrary: he has written, that these traditions, and these books, have no other effect than that of confirming him in his opinion. M. de Voltaire, in his *Philosophie de l'Histoire*, quotes frequently the historian Josephus: he quotes even the book, the chapter;—and not a word of the quotations is to be found in that writer. In the treatise upon tolerance, the author pretends, that *Nebuchadnezzar was changed into an ox*. 'It is said, in holy writ, that the mind of this prince was alienated, that he wandered several years in the fields, and that he lived like an ox, on the herbs of the field; but the scriptures do not any where say that he was metamorphosed into an ox.'

It is read in *le Dictionnaire Philosophique*, that *Bathsheba had artifice enough to cause the inheritance to be given to the*

* Dict. Philosophique.

fruit of her adultery;—and the scripture says, that the fruit of the adultery of Bathsheba died a few days after its birth, and that it was the child she had after this which had that inheritance. In another place, M. de Voltaire makes Bathsheba accomplice in the murder of her husband;—and the scriptures say nothing which can make this even to be suspected. M. de Voltaire repeats obstinately, *that among the Jews a man might marry his sister* *;—whilst marriages between brother and sister, by the same father, were expressly forbidden to the Jews; and the history of the Jewish nation furnishes no instance of an infringement of that law.

Among the birds of prey forbidden to the Jews, M. de Voltaire mentions the imaginary ones of *ixions and griffins* †; a fable which he has imagined, to turn into ridicule the laws of Moses, which speak not any where of these fabulous birds. But the following is a more impertinent, strange calumny, which is found in the work intitled, *Traité de la Tolérance*, and which the author has repeated in *Le Dictionnaire Philosophique*, in the additions to *L'Histoire Generale*, &c.—*that the Jewish people were cannibals*. Let us hear the first reasoning of the author upon this astonishing discovery. There have been people who were cannibals; therefore the Jews were also such, *Why should not they have been so?* *It would have been the only thing which was wanting to the people of God, to have made them the most abominable people upon earth*. I do not believe that hatred has ever caused a more strange manner of reasoning. Nevertheless, the author, doubting that these arguments might not generally persuade, perceived that it was necessary to support them by some proofs, and not finding any, he has invented them:—*Ezekiel*, says he, *promised to the Jews, in order to encourage them, that they should eat human flesh*. TRAITE DE LA TOLÉ-
RANCE.—*The prophet Ezekiel promised from God to the Hebrews, that if they defended themselves well against the king of Persia, they should have the flesh of horses*

* Dict. Philos. et questions Encyclop. art. Inceste.

† Traité de la Tolérance.

to eat, and the flesh of the horsemen. P. 22, DES ADDITIONS A L'HISTOIRE GENERALE.—*The Jews must necessarily have been, in the time of Ezekiel, in the habit of eating human flesh, since he prophesies to them, chap. xxxix. that if they defended themselves well against the king of Persia, they should not only eat the horses, but the horsemen, and other warriors. That is positive.*

DICT. PHILOS. art. ANTHROPOPHAGES.—Nothing, in fact, ought to appear more positive, to a reader who had never read Ezekiel, and who should find, in the works of so celebrated a writer, so striking and precise a fact, and frequently repeated. How is it possible to imagine, or suspect, that an illustrious author, a great man, an historian, a philosopher, should have been capable of making a false quotation, which contains so injurious and atrocious an inculpation; and of attributing to an author a meaning quite contrary to his own; not once, without reflection, but in twenty places?—The passage from Ezekiel is as follows:

‘ And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will
 ‘ give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the
 ‘ valley of the passengers on the east side of the sea;
 ‘ and it shall stop the noses of the passengers; and there
 ‘ shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude; and they
 ‘ shall call it The valley of Hamon-gog. . . . And
 ‘ thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God, Speak
 ‘ unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the
 ‘ field, Assemble yourselves and come; gather your-
 ‘ selves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice
 ‘ for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of
 ‘ Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye
 ‘ shall eat flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of
 ‘ the princes of the earth.’

To have found in this passage that Ezekiel promised to the Jews that they should eat human flesh, it was not possible to have remarked, nor even to have read these lines: *Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves and come*; an inattention which is not probable. Is it more easy to believe, that it has been possible to perceive, in these

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expressions, that *the promise was made to the Jews*, and not to the beasts of prey? M. de Voltaire, being closely pressed upon so palpable a falsehood, was himself forced to acknowledge it, and to agree, in a note in the *Treatise upon Tolerance*, that this promise of *eating the horse and the horseman*, was made by the prophet to beasts of prey.—It is with the same justice and truth, that M. de Voltaire has accused the Jews with having sacrificed human victims, according to the orders of their legislator; whilst, on the contrary, it was one of the principal abominations for which God had resolved to destroy the Canaanites; and Moses had forbidden nothing more expressly to his people, than to imitate that detestable worship.—In this same *Traité de la Tolérance*, the author is astonished that the *Levites* were able to exterminate *twenty-three thousand men*, who had worshipped the golden calf. It seems, according to him, that it was an handful of priests which exterminated an army;—and scripture says, that it was the *entire tribe* of Levi, composed of at least twelve thousand men, who armed themselves against that idolatry; and that there were but *three thousand men* who were punished with death for that crime. What then becomes of all the reasonings, all the declamations of the critic, upon the *impossibility of the Levites having exterminated twenty-three thousand men*, when it is found, that it was twelve thousand men who killed three thousand? All the sarcasms of M. de Voltaire against religion have no more foundation; his criticisms rest upon falsehoods only, which he invents, or repeats, according to the authors whom he copies, and who have been refuted upon every point *. M. de Voltaire had neither read these refutations, nor the sacred writings; and he adopted blindly the errors of those English writers, although their works were universally despised by their own countrymen. There are, nevertheless, many falsehoods in the writings of M. de Voltaire, which are of his own invention: among others, all that he says

* Tindal, Collins, &c.

upon the subject of the Midianites, put to death for their depravity and idolatry * ; and this strange imputation, that forty-two thousand men were put to the sword, for not having pronouned well the word Shibboleth. Certainly, M. de Voltaire was not ignorant, that the massacre of the Ephraimites was not because of the pronunciation of the word Shibboleth ; but because this pronunciation discovered the contending parties to each other †.

One of the most singular falsehoods which M. de Voltaire permitted himself to be the abettor of is, that of having himself composed a work against religion, intitled, *Avis Important de My-lord Bolingbroke*, in order to support himself by the authority of that celebrated man. This fraud, so easy to be discovered, has not been denied by even its author ; who got this little piece reprinted, and inserted in an edition of his works published under his own inspection. It is thus also that M. de Voltaire has, in order to give more weight to his opinions, particularly endeavoured to augment the list of unbelievers, by putting upon it many writers who, on the contrary, have ever maintained the right cause ; among others, the learned Le Clerc. ‘ Nothing,’ says Chauffepied, ‘ irritated him (Le Clerc) so much as the reproaches of Deism, which his enemies sometimes made him ; and which most assuredly he did not merit : that may be judged of, by the conversation he had with the celebrated Collins, during a visit which this Englishman, accompanied by some free-thinkers like himself, made him in Holland Le Clerc held out firmly for revelation ; he pressed closely these Deists, and made them perceive that they broke the most sure bands of humanity ; that they taught men to throw off the yoke of the laws ; that they took away the most powerful motives

* Decency does not permit me to relate here the falsehoods of M. de Voltaire upon this subject ; many of the same kind are found in his most philosophical works.

† As, in England, the pronunciation of the TH, may as easily distinguish the Irish from the English.

‘ to virtue; and that they deprived men of all their
 ‘ consolations. What will you substitute for them,
 ‘ added he? Without doubt, you figure to yourselves
 ‘ that you will have statues erected to your memories,
 ‘ for the great services you shall have rendered to
 ‘ mankind: but I must tell you, that the part you act,
 ‘ renders you contemptible and odious to them.’

It is with no more reason that M. de Voltaire places, in the list of unbelievers, Le Rabin Abenezra; who has not said a word of what he attributes to him: no more than Wollaston, an English author, who never wrote but in favour of religion; and it is probable, as the author of *des Lettres de quelques Juifs* remarks, that M. de Voltaire had never read the works of this learned writer, and that he knew the title only of this treatise; which partial knowledge was capable of leading him into error.

‘ *When the rough draft of natural religion appeared,*’ says the author of *La Bibliotheque Angloise*, ‘the libertine cabal thought, at first, that it was in its favour: it triumphed, but its joy was of short duration; and the perusal of the book presently undeceived the public*.’

M. de Voltaire, and those who have copied after him, have so often repeated, that there is no mention made in the Old Testament of the immortality of the soul, that there is no opinion which is better established among the common people, who are, in general, in France, very ignorant of the holy scriptures. Your Highness, who has read them with a particular attention, and who reads every day faithful extracts, made on your first perusal of them, will never forget, that a thousand passages in the books of Moses establish the immortality of souls, and the belief of an eternal life. Among others, the apparitions of angels, and the for-

* It has been already observed, that M. de Voltaire has falsely attributed to Locke, opinions upon universal tolerance, absolutely contrary to those of that philosopher.

bidding to raise up the dead * ; the discourse of Jacob upon the loss of Joseph, &c. †. In all the other books of the Old Testament, the immortality of the soul is as clearly acknowledged, and taught to be believed. At the beginning of the captivity of the Jews, Daniel declares, that *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Has not your Highness read in the Proverbs, *Withhold not correction from the child : for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.* Chap. xxiii.

And in Ecclesiastes : *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Chap. xii. and last.

In the Wisdom of Solomon : *For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality : and having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded.* Chap. iii.

The same dogma is also formally announced in the Psalms of David, which are generally read—Job, touched by the hand of the Lord, cried out, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*—Let there be joined to all the examples of the infidelity of M. de Voltaire, the quotations I have already recited relative to the laws of the Jews, and these strange assertions : *That the ancient people never restrained the liberty of thinking ;—that the Christian religion is the only one which has been the cause*

* It was one of the laws of Moses which was often infringed.

† The ancient Hebrews, says the author *des Lettres de quelques Juifs*, called the abode of the dead, *Sheol* ; and the tomb, *Keber*. This one distinction proves evidently that they believed in the immortality of the soul. See, upon this subject, the instructive and short dissertation in the 2d vol. *des Lettres de quelques Juifs*.

of bloodshed, &c.—and men will be convinced, that there has never been an author who has dared to disguise and betray truth with so much effrontery.—What would it appear to be, if the complete refutation of his works against religion were read? It would appear, that he has not written, upon any thing of this kind, a single half page which does not contain gross falsehoods and absurd calumnies. These refutations form a long continuation of volumes; a continuation still infinitely more extended, if there be comprehended the critiques wherein the errors, mistakes, and falsehoods, purely historical, of this celebrated writer, are animadverted upon*.

I will not here mention that great number of little anecdotes†, invented by M. de Voltaire; of perverted, curtailed, and imagined facts; of those false judgments, and ill-timed pleasantries, which are continually found in his historical works: moreover, it is unanimously agreed, that no historian ever wrote with so little exactness. His partiality is particularly revolting in every thing which concerns, in the least, religion. With what animosity and insincerity does he incessantly attack the ministers of the Gospel, without ever enter-

* These critiques may be found in *des Lettres de quelques Juifs*; les *Lettres Critiques* de M. l'Abbé Gauchat; the learned works of M. l'Archer: those of M. l'Abbé Nonotte; the work intitled, *Erreurs de Voltaire*, which has already passed through eight edition; in the work intitled, *Refutation de la Bible Expliquée par Voltaire*; &c.

† As for instance, when he makes Mademoiselle de Montpensier, say the contrary of what she wrote herself in her Memoirs, which are in every body's hands: when he is willing to demonstrate that the *Testament Politique* of Cardinal Richlieu is a supposed thing. M. le Marechal de Richlieu has proved to him the authenticity of this Testament; and M. de Voltaire has not withdrawn a falsehood, which he was obliged to acknowledge as such. Let it be judged, by these two instances of historical falsehoods, what he has permitted himself, in things infinitely more difficult to be cleared up.

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ing into the particulars of the useful and glorious things which they have done !

‘ Religion,’ says the author *des Lettres Critiques*, ‘ is the work of God alone ; if it were the work of men it would have long ago been destroyed. Without speaking of the great obstacles which it would have met with at its establishment, each century seems to have produced new ones. If, to the unceasing efforts of its enemies, there be added the negligence and misery of its pastors, the wisdom and power of Him who has preserved it will be better perceived. A judicious Christian sees, in this preservation, Providence alone ; which, without standing in need of human succour, knows how to accomplish its designs, and to consummate its work. The more the infidelity of ministers is quoted, the more he respects the ministry, and Him who is the author of it ; in fighting for the calamities of the church, he discovers, even under these clouded appearances, the holiness and immovable stability of religion.— Moreover, it is by the most unjust prejudice that men are obstinately determined not to look upon it but under an unfavourable appearance ; and to shut their eyes against that which it presents, both edifying and brilliant. They distinguish the shadows of Pagan moral virtues, sunk in an abyss of superstition and excess ; and they strive to find out the smallest weaknesses of Christianity, although they be a thousand times compensated for, and effaced by a distinguished light and piety. Is this an equitable method ? If men will recall the schisms, the disorders and abuses which are to be found in the history of the church ; it is necessary to add thereto, great ecclesiastics, their virtues, their zeal, their immense works ; the conversion of the people, the instruction of the faithful, the austerity of the solitary and penitent, the innocence of the virgins, the fervor of the different religious orders ; in a word, all the works which, even in the darkest ages, have illustrated the church. Its history, thus faithfully written, would present

‘ no more difficulties. Under the shades even which seem to render it obscure, men would acknowledge the truth of its dogmas, the holiness of its laws, the stability of its worship; finally, the wisdom of Providence, which governs and preserves it *.’

I will finish this chapter, by quoting some remarkable mistakes made by M. de Voltaire; and several circumstances, which will prove the excess of his incoherence.—‘ M. de Voltaire, by a mistake singular enough, (says M. P Abbé Foucher) transforms into a man the title of a work (by Sadder.) *Zoroaster*, says he, in his writings preserved by Sadder, feigns that God, &c. The author of Sadder is known but under the name of Melic Schah: moreover, this wise man has not preserved the writings of Zoroaster; he meant to make an abridgment of them. M. de Voltaire has never read the Sadder, nor the book of Mr. Hyde.’ Therefore, it was M. P Abbé Foucher who taught M. de Voltaire that the Sadder is a poem, and not a man.

In the *Philosophie de l'Histoire* is found the following learned remark: ‘ Jean Castriot was the son of a despot, that is to say, of a vassal prince, for that is what despot signified; and it is strange that the word despot has been given to great sovereigns, who have rendered themselves absolute.’

M. P Archer, and many other authors, have not failed to animadvert upon this mistake, which is, in fact, a very strange one; for the word despot has ever signified, not a vassal prince, but an absolute master who commanded slaves.

It is written, in *la Raison par Alphabet*, that the Jews took the name of *Jehovah* from the Syrians and in the *DICTIONNAIRE PHILOSOPHIQUE* that they borrowed the word *Jehovah* from the Phœnicians; and in *LA PHILOSOPHIE DE L'HISTOIRE*, that they took this word from the Egyptians. Every reader will see, in these different opinions, at least two mistakes: but the learned have found

* M. P Abbé Gauchat, tom. iv.

three; and they have proved, that this word is Hebrew, and consequently has not been borrowed either from the Syrians, or the Phœnicians, or the Egyptians. The same author has written, in *la Bible enfin Expliquée*, that no prophet ever said that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene; because, not knowing the Hebrew, he was ignorant that the name of Nazarene (*Natzi*) has the same root and signification as that of Notzer, which Isaiah gives to the Messiah*. It is with the same erudition, that M. de Voltaire calls the city of *Cariat-Sepher*, a country; and that he says (*Defense de Mon Oncle*) : 'If the sciences were at that time cultivated in the little city of Dabir, how greatly must they have been honoured in Sidon and in Tyre, which were called the Countries of Books, and of Archives!' On the contrary, the cities of Tyre and Sidon never had this appellation; it was the city of *Dabir* which was called *the City of Books, the City of Archives*.

The same author, by an inattention difficult to be conceived, places, in *la Philosophie de l'Histoire*, the book of Joshua, and others, in the Pentateuch; forgetting even the signification of Pentateuch, which should have recalled to his memory, that this collection contains but the five books of the legislator; and that neither the book of Joshua, nor others which M. de Voltaire mentions, made any part of it †.

M. de Voltaire has joked a good deal upon the incoherence and contradictions of J. J. Rousseau; which he had not, assuredly, a right to do: he who contradicts himself so frequently, and in so striking and gross a manner; he who says, that *the Father Daniel has not*

* *Refutation de la Bible enfin Expliquée*—a learned work, in one volume; wherein a number of falsehoods, errors, and inconceivable mistakes, of M. de Voltaire are detected. This work appeared in 1781.

† Forced to confine myself to a few examples, I cannot quote an infinity of other mistakes, full as singular; but the critiques which I have indicated may be consulted upon this subject, and wherein a great number of curious things of this kind will be found.

the reputation of an historian profound and hardy enough; but that he passes for a very faithful one; that he may sometimes err, but that it is not permitted to call him a liar: and he, who gives this judgment, says, in another place, that the *Father Daniel* is an unworthy historian, who insults the truth, and his readers. Monsieur de Voltaire was one of Pope's greatest panegyrists; that is to say, of the foundation of his doctrine, which tended to prove that, "*whatever is, is right*." Monsieur Voltaire calls Pope, a sublime philosopher, who had carried the flambeau into the depths of existence*;—and, in many works, amongst others, *Dans le Poëme sur la Destruction de Lisbonne*, the French poet formally rejects this same axiom.

' Vous criez, tout est bien, d'une voix lamentable!
' L'Univers vous dément, & votre propre cœur
' Cent fois de votre esprit a réfuté l'erreur.—
' Il le faut avouer, le mal est sur la terre;
' Elémens, animaux, humains, tout est en guerre.
' Quand l'homme ose gémir d'un fléau si terrible,
' Il n'est pas orgueilleux, hélas! il est sensible."

In vain you urge, "*whatever is, is right*;"
In vain persuade the wretch he feels delight:
The world proclaims the misery of mankind;
The heart refutes the errors of the mind;
Earth, sea, and air, are in continual strife,
And war perpetual is the curse of life.—
If man complain then, say not pride has part,
Say rather, Nature gave a feeling heart.

M. de Voltaire has written, that the belief of the immortality of the soul is an *useful, salutary, and holy belief, necessary to men*;—and he has, in many volumes, denied that truth: among others, in his *Lettres de Memmius*, and in his *A, B, C*, wherein is found this formal conclusion: *Let us speak more frankly—There is no soul: this system,*

* Monsieur de Voltaire supports the same opinion in his *Discours sur la Nature de l'Homme*; where he says, that man is ungrateful and inconsiderate, to find the world imperfect, and to complain of his miseries.

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the most hardy, the most astonishing of all, is at the bottom, the most simple.

There are, in several works of M. de Voltaire, the most pompous eulogiums of Zoroaster, whom he calls *a great man, a wise legislator*. He assures us, that his writings are admirable and very superior to all the books of the *Jesus*;—and in other works, he says, that *Zoroaster is but a dangerous fool; and that Nostradamus, and the Urine Doctor, are sensible people, compared with that man, possessed with the spirit of a devil*. He adds, that his writings are only abominable trash; of which one cannot read two pages, without pitying human nature.

In his Letters to the King of Prussia, the author refutes forcibly, and even in an affecting manner, the system of fatality;—and in the articles *Chaine des evenemens, Destinée, Liberté, &c.* DU DICT. PHILOSOPHIQUE, the author maintains *absolute fatality*. He pretends, that every thing is *necessary*, as well morally as physically; and that man has no more liberty than his dog: that we desire *necessarily*, in consequence of ideas which present themselves *necessarily* to us, &c. He adds, ‘I have *necessarily* the passion of writing this; and thou, thou hast equally the passion of condemning me: we are both equally fools, equally the toys of destiny; thy nature is to do evil, mine to love truth, and to publish it in spite of thee.’

It is the same author who has for so long a time outraged and denied the Divinity, who has composed this fine verse:

“Dieu t’a fait pour l’aimer et non pour le comprendre.”

God has made thee to love him, and not to comprehend him.

These examples will be sufficient to give your Highness a just idea of the partiality, ignorance, insincerity, and incoherence, with which M. de Voltaire has always attacked religion. I flatter myself that you will one day be well enough informed, to be able not only to read without

without danger, but with advantage, the best works of this celebrated author; you will not adopt his errors, and you will admire, without prejudice, his superior talents; and especially his best dramatical works, which will for ever be the delight of the nation.

All the other detractors of religion have written with as much insincerity, and as little knowledge of antiquity: almost all of them have only copied M. de Voltaire; who, in this respect, was only himself a copier of the English Deists, Tindal, Collins, Bolingbroke, and Shaftesbury. These audacious and superficial writers had no influence upon the morals of an enlightened and considerate nation; their calumnies, their contradictions, and falsehoods, appeared generally absurd: and although one of them, Shaftesbury, had the talent of railing and joking, with as much finesse and wit as agreeableness, he formed no sect; and he had only the frivolous advantage of being at the head of a little cabal, universally discredited and despised. In England the study of Holy Writ makes a part of education. Authors who permitted themselves to make false quotations, or frequent alterations from the text, could not necessarily flatter themselves with the idea of obtaining the confidence of the public; refutations were read and admitted, because they were impatiently desired and expected: and M. de Voltaire, copyist of these same authors, but much more audacious, and a thousand times more incoherent and unfaithful than they were, persuaded, gained over the multitude, and produced the most dreadful revolution of morals. The English pretend, that he could not have had such an influence, except upon a nation as light and frivolous as it is ingenious. It is true, that M. de Voltaire is as little esteemed in England as a *philosopher*, and an historian, as he is justly admired there as a poet. How comes it that this extraordinary man has never had an idea of true glory? Let us suppose that, with his delightful wit and rare talents, he had always respected religion, morals, and truth—He would never have been the *chief of a party*; he would have made less noise, and

and would perhaps have later obtained a brilliant reputation, but one a thousand times greater and more happy. He would also have been able to say,

‘ Je ne dois qu’à moi seul toute ma renommée *.’

And what a fame ! He would have been the first poet of the age in which he lived ; and with impartiality, wisdom, and virtuous principles, he might have been the best historian of his country. We should have neither his *Zapata*, his *A, B, C*, nor his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* ; no more than his great number of libels, and works equally bad and licentious, which form the greatest part of his writings : but we should have more tragedies ; and if we had but one as fine as that of *ALZIRE*, or *MAHOMET*, who would not prefer such a production to all the trash, impieties, and injuries, equally fastidious and shocking ? Instead of insipid notes, little instructive, and in which is found a trifling, and frequently an unjust, critique, we should have an admirable commentary upon the pieces of the great Corneille. With what a nobleness and energy would such a man as M. de Voltaire have written his remarks, if he had given way, without constraint, to the impressions which he received ! Finally, if he had appreciated, equitably, the talents and merit of celebrated authors, he would have left us *des mélanges de littérature*, which would undoubtedly have formed the most perfect course of instruction of the kind. Such is the brilliant, solid, and pure renown, which he might have enjoyed ! Peace, happiness, and universal admiration, would have been the fruits of it.—Let these reflections teach your Highness to perceive the usefulness of reason, decency, and virtue ; and never forget these just remarks of a Christian philosopher :

‘ Reflect upon all the great talents which render men illustrious ; if they be given to the impious, it

* Pierre Corneille.—‘ ’Tis to myself alone that I owe all my fame.’

' is always a misfortune to their country, and to the
 ' age in which they live. . . . These great wits, so
 ' celebrated, have, from the moment their hearts be-
 ' came corrupted, left nothing but lascivious and per-
 ' nicious writings, wherein the poison, prepared by
 ' able hands, infects every day public morals ; and in-
 ' which succeeding ages will come to seek the licen-
 ' tiousness and corruption of our own*.'

* Maffillon. Dimanche de la Passion, *sur la gloire
 humaine.*

C. H. A. P. XVII.

OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRIDE.

MEN of the world are commonly frivolous, inconstant, and superficial; but they have, in general, a sort of good taste, and a delicacy which inspires them with an invincible aversion to pedantry, to a dogmatical and sharp manner, and to all the irregularities produced by an excessive and ill-governed pride. The habitude of living in an extensive circle, teaches men necessarily to disguise their pretensions, to manage skilfully the self-love of others, and to express themselves in a manner which may indicate moderation and modesty; therefore, one of the things which has the most contributed to diminish the enthusiasm of men of the world for modern philosophers, is the imperious, and prophetic tone of the latter. *Philosophical principles* have been preserved, because they are convenient; but *philosophers* have at length been laughed at, because they were become ridiculous, in shewing, without disguise, the most intolerant and extravagant pride.

In fact, their works have disgusted, in this point of view, their most zealous partisans. Never has pride dared to discover itself with so little art and management; and to express itself with so much arrogance. Men who have never possessed any place, who have never studied the laws, who have never been employed in negotiations, nor in the administration of affairs, have they a right to criticise all the operations of government, to draw up plans of legislation, and to set themselves up for reformers of the state? This ridiculous folly has been renewed in the present year (1786).

An anonymous writer has pretended to give us, in a pamphlet, a complete plan of legislation; assuring us, very gravely, that this new, wise, and admirable plan has but one inconvenience; that of being too sublime

blime for the present age *. The author says, ' that his hero, whose name signifies the god *Thor*, was one of the most extraordinary men which nature ever produced, and one who has perhaps approached the nearest to perfection, of which human nature is capable of being elevated; that no man, perhaps, ever offered to our admiration a more perfect manner of commanding respect; that there existed in Europe but a very small number of men capable of comprehending him altogether, and of judging of his opinions; that all these qualities formed a character unparalleled, perhaps, in the history of mankind; that nature had given him principles and virtues which were particular to him; that his history is capable of interesting every age and every nation; and that his genius has preceded the age in which he lived, so as to make him unknown to it.'—We know that M. Turgot was a man of abilities, and what is much better, a virtuous man; but without the author of this life, we should never have supposed that he was *the most extraordinary man nature ever produced.*—What! more extraordinary than all the great kings, the great ministers, all the legislators, the politicians, the learned, the superior geniuses who have appeared upon the earth, from the creation of the world to the year 1786? Yes, *his qualities formed a character unparalleled in the history of man.* He was master of all the sciences, of chymistry, physic, &c. He alone had found ideas on commerce, agriculture, and legislation: he knew equally well history, geography, and every language: he was, moreover, a *profound metaphysician, a sublime moralist*, and an excellent poet; for he wrote verses which *every body* attributed to M. de Voltaire: and but for the gout, with which he was afflicted, he would have written *epic poems, tragedies*, and other works, in which he would have displayed all his knowledge. It is very fortunate that, *in the small number of men in Europe*, who

* Vide de M. Turgot.

have had genius enough to appreciate M. Turgot, one should have been found to transmit to us his opinions, and to have had sufficient memory to retain exactly every thing he had heard him say; and that, finally, these *hearsays* should have furnished the subject of an *history*, of such a nature as to interest *all nations and ages*.

We read in ancient history, that Cleon, a bad writer, in presence of the wise Calisthenes, delivered the most ridiculously exaggerated eulogium of Alexander the Great. 'Were the king present,' said Calisthenes to him, 'if he heard thy foolish discourse, he would oblige thee to be silent.'

The real friends of M. Turgot might say as much of the author of an eulogium not less extraordinary. This author, as I have already observed, shews no more moderation in his satires; he attacks indiscriminately every thing which is the most sacred and respectable. Humour, some secret malice, and a particular hatred, seem to have dictated this work; which is full of remarkable caprices and contrasts, which, if not poignant, are at least singular. We find therein the most haughty and extravagant opinions, and at the same time the cold style of a writer divested of energy and imagination, and which is always incorrect, negligent, and unnatural. The cold, serious, and precise author, calmly proposes the total overthrow of laws, and religious, political, and civil customs; he is never animated, and lays down the most whimsical maxims with that dulness which is attributed but to reason: his folly has no resemblance to delirium; it is not by fits, but continued, equal, and phlegmatic; and although excessive, it does not amuse; it is so monotonous, and announced in so insipid a manner, as to inspire neither curiosity nor surprise. The fate of the book has been as extraordinary as itself; it attacked religion, laws, and government, and has made no noise in the world. Dryness and insipidity may be excused, in favour of wisdom; but extravagance and audacity have so many means of amusing, astonishing, and

and pleasing, as to be unpardonable when they fatigue. Some people have thought that this work, which appeared to be produced as an eulogium of M. Turgot, might perhaps be a satire in disguise. In fact, all the encomiums are strikingly ridiculous in the idea of every body; and these strange exaggerations are accompanied by imputations very injurious to the memory of that respectable man. The author plainly declares, that M. Turgot had no religion, nor believed the soul to be immortal. *Does the soul perish with the body? He did not believe it. But what becomes of it? He knew nothing of the matter: he only hoped for rewards; he was convinced there were no punishments.*

He annulled every Testament: he also wished to suppress every charitable foundation, which he looked upon as *dangerous*. It will not easily be made appear, that there is *danger* in admitting into hospitals miserable and abandoned children, and that multitude of sick and poor which would perish without these succours. Certain it is, that the present age is not far enough advanced to comprehend, that the foundations of the Invalids, of Saint Cyr, the Military School, and all others of the same kind, instead of being useful and respectable establishments, are *dangerous* ones; which prove only the weak mind of their founders*. M. Turgot,

* Besides, this strange idea, attributed to M. Turgot, is taken from *l'Esprit des Loix*. M. de Montesquieu wished that *hospitals* might be suppressed in poor states: he adds, *that hospitals, by the spirit of idleness they inspire, augment general, and consequently particular poverty.*—But were it true that idleness sent some wretches to hospitals, would it not, on that account, be necessary to suppress these respectable asylums, where lame indigence, the abandoned orphan, and age overwhelmed with infirmities, are humanely received? How detestable is philosophy, when it gravely gives out paradoxes so contrary to humanity! What can be more revolting, than a man who, in the enjoyment of perfect health, and all the superfluities of life, shuts himself up in his closet to suppress, with a single dash of his pen, *hospitals* in general; and who wishes

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Turgot, adds the author, did not wish that *medals* and marks of distinction should be the reward of talents and learning: in these cases, he wished rather that *gratifications* and *pensions* should be given; these are, in fact, more solid. *No medals, no secondary honours, with which quackery gratifies vanity: he wished to encourage, not to corrupt.* It appears to me that money will always corrupt more than marks of distinction.—*No medals!* and why not say also, no crosses of *St. Louis*, no blue ribbons, &c? These kinds of quackery inspire full as much vanity as the brave Broussard, the bold Lucot, and that heroic young man, Chretien Joseph, shewed on receiving their medals.

M. Turgot thought (says the anonymous author) *beneficence was but a weakness, unless it served public utility.* This is calumniating an honest man, by imputing to him a maxim so contrary to humanity. What! separate acts of charity, which have no general influence! As, for instance, to secretly comfort useless and suffering individuals, and many other actions of the same kind, are not virtuous, and prove nothing more than a *weakness*. This is a new idea; it will never seduce a good heart. What kind of man must he be, who, when there was a question of giving, of assisting, should calculate coldly, if that which was asked of him might *serve public utility*?—The following passage is not less surprising in a panegyric.

M. Turgot thought that satire, if it were real, was but an act of justice: he wrote satirical verses. He thought an author, who wrote satires, might conceal his name, in order to avoid unjust oppression.

We plainly perceive the reason why the anonymous writer attributes such a principle to his hero: but this

to prove that the unfortunate, who would perish without these establishments, ought to be deprived of this last resource! There is, perhaps, but one thing which could be more ridiculous: this would be a desire to have such opinions attributed to one's self; to take them from the most known work, and to give them to the world as new and luminous.

little artifice had not the success he promised himself. Men will always think, as J. J. Rousseau has always so well expressed it, that an author *ought to answer for his book*; and that honour prescribes to every citizen to declare himself, especially when he acts on the offensive. A writing, whatever it may be, if signed, is not the work of a coward: he may be found reprehensible, but the author cannot, on account of it, be justly despised; whilst, on the contrary, every anonymous, satirical publication, will never be otherwise than a libel. Although the work, from which I have just quoted some passages, has produced no sensation, I thought it my duty to speak of it to your Highness; because I know of none which better demonstrates the extent of the pretensions, and the excess of the extravagance, of *philosophical pride*.

C H A P. XVIII.

ANSWERS TO SOME OBJECTIONS MADE BY PHILOSOPHERS AGAINST RELIGION.

THE EXISTENCE of God, the immortality of the soul, revelation, the mysteries, the eternity of punishments, original sin, the dogma of grace ; these, MON-SEIGNEUR, are the most important truths with which we can be acquainted : truths which have been attacked, within our remembrance, with so much animosity and want of faith, and of which I have presented to your Highness the principal proofs ; for the confined plan of this work did not permit me to give you a detail of them all. I have said enough upon these subjects, to convince an upright mind and a pure heart : to these I ought to confine myself. My ambition does not lead me to recall those who wilfully deviate from the right path : I have neither sufficient talents or knowledge to justify such a hope. I have related, in the course of this work, the principal sophisms with which incredulity combats faith ; the plan I have followed, has forced me to omit some of them : I will here assemble the rest, in order that your Highness may be fully acquainted with every thing which impiety can oppose to religion.

One of the most specious arguments which philosophers use against religion, is this : *The Christian religion is widely propagated ; yet there are multitudes of men who are deprived of its lights : Can it be conceived, that a Being supremely just will eternally punish his creatures, for having been ignorant of what they could not know ?*

Nothing but ignorance, or want of faith, could have proposed this pretended difficulty. So far are we from being told by religion, that God will punish men for having been ignorant of his laws, when they have not had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with them, that,

that, on the contrary, we are instructed by it, that God will not punish men for not having discovered that which was marked out for them by lights placed beyond the reach of their comprehension : this is not shutting our eyes, but opening them and seeing nothing. Ignorance of positive laws, if it be really insurmountable, is not a crime. God certainly wishes to save us all, and religion calls out to those who are willing to hear it ; but God wishes to save us by the means which his holiness and wisdom necessarily prescribe *. If we obstinately refuse them, we shall be lost, because we will absolutely be so ; and, by the decrees of God, he will not save us without we seek it ourselves †. A savage is not held by positive laws and truth ; but he has the eternal law, and the means of fulfilling it. It is in the order of the immutable equity of God, to communicate to men the duties he prescribes, and to render them susceptible of execution. From this point, metaphysically certain, it follows, that each individual will not be judged but according to the measure of his lights, of his strength, and to the nature of his works. According to this truth, if the savage be faithful to every law, what will be his fate ? How could he obtain a knowledge of Jesus Christ ? We will answer, that God has infinitely more means of acting, than we either are or can be acquainted with. We will neither examine or criticise his decrees, nor prescribe ways : it is sufficient for us to know, that he is supremely equitable ; and that he will never punish mere ignorance, when it is forced and invincible. We pretend not to clear the whole of religion from every obscurity ; and to expose the decrees of God as clearly to view as a geometrical axiom. Reason demonstrates, that redemption is revealed, and that God is just ; if, therefore, savages, faithful to the

* We can neither judge of nor comprehend these means.

† Gauchat, tom. iii.

' law by grace, have no exterior knowledge of the
 ' Gospel, reason tells us, that the ways of the Lord
 ' are wise, profound, and infinitely varied; that he
 ' knows how to govern the heart, and enlighten the
 ' mind, by means unknown to human prudence; that
 ' one day he will make manifest to man the whole of
 ' his ways, and their equity. In every sect, even in
 ' a Christian one, God will never require more than a
 ' faithful use of his gifts. If he draws an impenetra-
 ' ble veil between the human heart and a positive truth,
 ' men are not culpable because they are ignorant of it:
 ' if a man has any means of knowing it, and neglects
 ' to make use of them, his blindness being voluntary,
 ' the error is imputed to him. J. J. Rousseau makes
 ' a pompous display of his sincerity: '*If I deceive
 ' myself,*' says he, '*it is contrary to my wishes: He who
 ' reads in the bottom of my heart, well knows that I am
 ' not attached to my blindness. Incapable as I am to extri-
 ' cate myself therefrom by the light of my own knowledge,
 ' the only means I have of doing it, is a good life. Every
 ' man has a right to hope to be enlightened, when he renders
 ' himself worthy of it.'*'

' *He who reads in the bottom of the heart,* knows how
 ' to discern, under an appearance of candour, a false
 ' and illusory avowal. There are involuntary and
 ' innocent errors. There are also errors whose source
 ' is secret pride, the love of systems, and an attachment
 ' to our own ideas. When we do not love our blind-
 ' ness, we use the means God has given us to become
 ' enlightened. A good life is one of the ways of
 ' truth; but it is not the only one. Did it remain to
 ' be explained what philosophers mean by *a good life*, it
 ' would perhaps be only a life of pride and ostentation.
 ' The insufficiency of our knowledge leads to submis-
 ' sion. Too weak of ourselves to find the way of
 ' salvation, reason tells us to seek our surety, our sup-
 ' port, in the breast of that visible authority which
 ' points it out. The more philosophers are willing to
 ' discuss the bounds of our understanding, and the
 ' magnitude of the objects of religion, the more they
 Vol. II. I ' will

‘ will prove against themselves, and for the method of Christianity. It is so analogous to the wants of mankind, and the designs of God, that its wisdom, usefulness, and necessity, cannot be unobserved. Every man ought to *hope to become enlightened*, when he uses proper means. But as long as he remains obstinate, and blind to his errors, and he will not discover and reject them, how should he be worthy of knowing the truth? He puts obstacles in his own way. To regulate his life, to think it good, and from this suffrage to hope for truth as a thing due to him, is mere illusion *.’

Another reproach which philosophers have made to religion, and have repeated in all their works, after Montesquieu, is:

‘ The principles of religion’ (says the author of *l’Esprit des Loix*) ‘ have had an extreme influence upon the propagation of the human species: sometimes they have encouraged it, as among the Jews and Mahometans; and at others they were repugnant thereto, as among the Romans, when they became Christians.’

‘ This,’ says Gauchat, ‘ is a prejudice of our calculating philosophers: they would be astonished, if it were proved to them, that, considering the propagation alone of the human species, religion, far from being opposite, is very favourable to it. It is true, it imposes celibacy in a certain profession; but, on the other hand, it so strictly forbids the commission of crimes, so exactly prescribes the holiness of matrimony, has such equitable rules for its unity and indissolubility, that we may venture to assert, that of all the means proper to people the universe, there is none so efficacious and permanent as fidelity to the spirit of religion. The more crimes are forbidden,

* Gauchat, tom. xix.—Let us add, that when men acknowledge, with so much *humility*, *their insufficiency*, they ought not, while waiting for the truth (which they so earnestly seek after), to publish opinions contrary to a religion which they pretend to respect.

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‘ the more is marriage encouraged. As licentiousness
 ‘ of morals decreases, the number of marriages in-
 ‘ creases: the more these are faithful, the more they
 ‘ are fruitful; therefore, religion is favourable to the
 ‘ propagation of the human species. It is not the piety
 ‘ of a few recluses; it is the celibacy of the impious and
 ‘ debauched, which depopulates the universe *.’

Finally, it has been said, that the morality of the Christian religion is so severe as to be impracticable; because it is impossible to wrench from the heart *all human affection, and to hate one's self.*

These reproaches cannot appear well founded, but to those who have no knowledge of religious principles.—So far from God's commanding us to root from our hearts *all human affection*, he expressly prescribes us tenderness for our parents, and fidelity to our friends.—Religion pretends not to destroy legitimate sentiments; it only wishes to regulate them. It is true, it teaches us that all excesses are condemnable; and when it forbids us passionate attachments for imperfect and perishable beings, it is not more severe in this point, than ancient philosophy: Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and almost all the Greek and Roman philosophers, looked upon the moderation of the passions as the true source of wisdom and happiness. By what odd incoherence do men condemn in the Gospel the principles of morality which are admired in pagan authors?

The light of reason only made the philosophers of antiquity comprehend, that a man of strong passions could not be happy; and they strove not to moderate sensibility, but to destroy it entirely, substituting in its place this egotism, with which they have been so much reproached; *It is better (says Epictetus) to suffer your son to become wicked, than to make you unhappy.* Such is the weakness of human understanding. Truth is no more for it than a light and fugitive shade; reason may easily perceive, but can never overtake and seize

* Gauchat, tom. v.

it. To sacrifice every thing, even the most sacred duties, to the fear of disturbing our repose, is a monstrous folly. Will repose be found in a neglect of duty? Therefore egotism will never procure happiness! Yet violent passions torment the mind. *To vegetate or suffer!* Is man reduced to this sad choice? No; let him hearken to religion, this only can fix his incertitudes; in making him acquainted with his true destination, it offers to his extreme sensibility the only object worthy to excite, and capable of satisfying it; it fulfils all the desires of his unbounded ambition, and moderates his earthly attachments; it only takes from them that excessive violence, the source of errors and remorse, but it leaves to natural inclinations, every thing agreeable and consolatory, every thing they can produce of generous or heroic; it renders friendship more solid, pure, and, above all, more disinterested*; it elevates above misfortune, by giving resignation; it extends and multiplies the duties of pious humanity; it creates compassion, the most tender and active sentiment; and by it the soul is equally purified, fortified, and aggrandized: it is religion only which can elevate man, and render him sublime, without swelling him with pride.

‘We may not only love God,’ says the author *des Maurs*, ‘without hating ourselves, but it is not true that we love him when we do not love ourselves. Ought we to have sentiments contrary to his? He loves us, let us not hope to please him by self-hatred.’

All these reasonings are so many sophisms.—‘To love God, we are not obliged to hate ourselves; man cannot hate his being and happiness, he cannot con-

* Those who pretend that religion forbids friendship, have a very false idea of it. Did not Jesus Christ himself shew the most tender preference to one of his disciples? Almost all the saints were susceptible to the charms of friendship. Saint Augustin loved saint Alpyus with the fondest tenderness; St. Simon Stylite, his disciple, Anthony; St. Aphreate, Anthemius; St. Fulgence, Felix, who exposed his life to save that of St. Fulgence; St. Bernard, Hughes de Mâcon, &c.

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found evangelical hatred with real hatred, as contrary
 to the will of God as to the essential constitution of
 our soul. God loves us, we ought therefore to love
 ourselves; the consequence is just; but to love our-
 selves with sentiments conformable to his. As he
 has destined for us an happiness of order and wisdom
 only, we ought to seek for no other. Because he
 loves us, he forbids us from following our inordinate
 desires, and from placing our affections and felicity
 on created objects. Because he loves us, he com-
 mands us to observe his laws, to submit to his pro-
 vidence, even the most severe; therefore we ought to
 love ourselves; religion requires nothing beyond this.
 The author *des Mœurs*, after having condemned pover-
 ty, continence, and self-denial, exclaims, *What could you*
do worse, wretched frantics, if you had chosen for a
God that mischievous spirit which you call the devil?
 God ordains not expressly, to all, certain painful and
 holy duties: and for this does he condemn them?
 Alms do not oblige us to refuse ourselves necessities;
 charity does not oblige a pious woman to consecrate
 all her leisure hours to works of active benevolence.
 But if the rich man give great alms, if this pious
 woman devote herself without reserve to alleviate the
 miseries of her fellow creature, are such actions com-
 demnable? We may therefore love God, and per-
 form works of supererogation*. To condemn the du-
 ties of civil life, marriage, and the legal possession
 of property, would be a crime, and not a perfec-
 tion†; to blame those who, from a christian mo-
 tive, renounce these advantages, is a criticism of
 which reason alone shews the injustice To

* By this passage, the Protestant reader will undoubtedly
 perceive the present work to be the composition of a
 member of the Romish church, which admits of works of
 supererogation, and maintains the observance of evangeli-
 cal councils to be such. By this means a stock of merit is
 laid up, of which the Romish church has the disposal.

TRANSLATOR.

† It would even be an heresy; such was that of the
 Montanists.

‘ do more than is expressly commanded, is it to violate the law of the Lord? He did not command these actions, but he practised them; to follow this road to perfection, is to approach nearer to him, to have a marked feature of resemblance to this primitive model of all virtue.”

Your Highness is at present acquainted with all the objections which impiety has been able to bring against religion. It remains for me to present you with some reflections, which appear striking, and will make you perceive the excessive injustice and incoherence of the detractors of religion.—They despise virtues produced by Christianity, and admire them when founded upon human motives:—they look upon him as a madman whom piety determines to renounce the world; and they vaunt the philosopher whom idleness and misanthropy leads into solitude:—they emphatically praise the philosophy which inspires a contempt for honours and riches: and find nothing but extravagance in him who voluntarily embraces evangelical poverty. The philosopher who suffers with firmness, and submits without murmuring to his destiny, is in their eyes a hero, a wise man; and the resigned Christian appears to them an insensible being. They speak with enthusiasm of the beneficence of the incredulous, and are untouched by supernatural actions, if produced by Christian charity!—Supposing these sentiments and virtues to have as much solidity, force, and purity in the heart of an impious man as in that of a true Christian, would not it be unjust to admire them only when they are found united to irreligion?

C H A P. XIX.

OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUES.

A FEELING heart, a happy disposition, give that precious quality called *goodness*; but reason and reflection only can produce *virtue*. To be good, requires neither pains, discernment, or knowledge; a child of ten years old may have as much goodness as a man of forty: whilst, on the contrary, we cannot become virtuous without pains and efforts. Virtue is to be acquired; goodness is a gift of nature: therefore, with a deal of goodness, we may err, and commit great faults. The good man is interesting, the virtuous man estimable. Since it is necessary to combat incessantly, to conquer our inclinations, and to triumph over ourselves, to be virtuous, it is evident, that we should not make such efforts without the most powerful motives. What are the motives which determine the impious to pursue virtue? The fear of public censure, the desire of being honoured, the love of glory: these sentiments will produce brilliant actions, and remarkable proceedings; but they will never inspire that delicacy, that pureness of mind, which belongs to the religious man alone. Human passions decrease with age; time moderates and destroys them. How feeble are virtues when they originate from the passions! like the flowers of the field which are faded, or turn up by a tempest, so an obstacle, a reverse of fortune, or an illness only, is often sufficient to destroy them for ever. But the decay of the body, the loss of youth, cannot enfeeble these striking ideas; *I am in the presence of God, who reads in the bottom of my heart, every moment of my life: His justice reserves for me eternal rewards or punishments.* Let us again observe, that religion renders every virtue more perfect, and that there are several which religion only can give; for instance, *a purity of mind.* An atheist never existed, who, born with strong

passions, supported irreproachable morals. Is there one, even, who always knows how to shew a proper respect to decency in his writings, discourse, and actions? But can it be believed, that a person wholly divested of religion watches attentively over his thoughts, and represses, with a continued care, those which wound decency and modesty? The flights, the deliriums of imagination, of whatever nature they may be, cause no scandal, do no harm in society, afflict nobody. This is assuredly the case when the *liberty of thinking* can produce no inconvenience to others; and it would be ridiculous and extravagant to limit it, when once no faith is given to the immortality of the soul or the existence of God; or even the system of deism: for if we suppose God never to be offended by our bad actions, we ought to attribute to him still more indifference about our thoughts, and especially those which pass entirely within ourselves. None, therefore, but a true Christian can possess a perfect purity of mind, and consequently he only can be constantly virtuous: it is he alone who finds as great an interest in *thinking well* as in *acting well*; to do good in secret, as to perform brilliant actions; to repress the wanderings of his imagination, to regulate the motions of his heart, as to preserve to himself a reputation free from reproach. With respect to other virtues, they receive a new lustre from religion. What is humanity without religion? a natural sentiment, it is true, but which never manifests itself but on occasions which rarely happen. To excite it, the most affecting spectacle of misery in our fellow-creatures is necessary; who could then resist the impulse of pity? The irreligious man, if his mind be susceptible, will aid the unfortunate who implore his assistance. The Christian does not content himself with comforting the wretches he happens to meet; he goes in search of those who have not courage enough to shew themselves. Worldly benevolence is never an habitual sentiment, still less a governing inclination; it costs but momentary sacrifices, it imposes no extraordinary deprivation: it produces some acts of ostentation, but not such as are surprising

prising and sublime ; it is excited only by present and affecting objects, either by pride or a desire of being distinguished. Christian charity, equally courageous, active, and tender, employs itself incessantly with the tender care of comforting suffering humanity ; it is this which discovers obscure corners, inhabited by desolated mothers, or orphans without support ; it is charity which, elevating itself above the most natural apprehensions, fears neither contagion nor fatigue ; it is charity which conducts us to those respectable asylums, where at each step we meet with the afflicting spectacle of grief and death, and which makes us penetrate the deep abyfs of horrid dungeons ! There it consoles oppressed innocence, and the guilty even may reasonably hope for its succours ; they suffer, which is a sufficient title to its consideration. By sacrificing every thing, pleasures, the agreeableness of life, fortune, liberty, and health ; by devoting itself, without reserve, to the wants of the unhappy, it never aspires to glory, nor the esteem of men ; it does better than despise encomiums, it does not believe them due to its actions ; it thinks only of fulfilling its duty.—Beneficence is highly vaunted, and scarcely is Christian charity spoken of, because it remains in secret, requires no acknowledgment, and never complains of the ungrateful. A Christian looks upon riches as nothing more than a deposit which Providence has confided to him to comfort the unhappy. The philosopher says to the unfortunate, *I give, I sacrifice to you* ; the Christian, *I restore to you, I fulfil the obligation imposed on me*. The first thinks he creates to himself a sacred debt, the last believes he acquits the one he owes—A faithful minister of the Divinity, he desires no acknowledgment but on his account ; an ever happy benefactor, he enjoys the sweet pleasure of aiding his fellow-creatures, without its being possible he should ever experience the vain agitation caused by the ingratitude of those he obliges. Christian humility conceals the greatest part of heroic actions inspired by religion ; but those which it has not been able to hide, sufficiently prove that reason and

philosophy, without the succour of faith, will never rise to this point of perfection. No; humanity alone will never engage the man of feeling to give his whole property as a ransom for captives, and, to conclude, by sacrificing the most precious of all possessions, liberty, to restore an only son to his mother*. Religion only could inspire St. Francois, of Sales, the Fenelon of the age in which he lived, with so extraordinary a disinterestedness, so ardent a charity, and with that indefatigable courage which supported him so long a time across the precipices and mountains of Savoy†. Philosophy never preserved princes and sovereigns from cruelty and ambition; and it is always for the happiness of the people, and the good of humanity, that religion sanctifies them. What examples of virtue will men dare to prefer to those which the detail of the actions of the popes, St. Leon, St. Gregory, and of the reigns of St. Louis, St. Ferdinand, &c. present us‡? Who can read, without admiration, the life of Elizabeth of Hungary§, and that of the two virtuous princesses, Jeanne de Bourgogne, queen of France, and the dutchess of Normandy; her daughter-in-law, who, during a horrid contagion, without remission succouring the wretched, were at last 'struck with that ' scourge, from which they strove to deliver them, and ' died of it? Have heroes, who die on the field of ' battle, more courage, or are they more generous, ' than these two victims to humanity¶? Numerous examples

* Paulin, bishop of Noli.—I have related this heroic action in *Les Annales de la Vertu*.

† This great man, equally celebrated for his writings and virtues, was bishop of Geneva, and cotemporary of Henry IV.

‡ Ferdinand, king of Spain, cousin-german to Louis IX. was, like him, a great king, a hero, and a saint.

§ Daughter of Andrew, king of Hungary, a widow at twenty years of age, who consecrated her whole fortune, and the rest of her life, to the necessities of the poor, the service of the sick, and the education of orphans.

¶ M. Galliard, *Histoire de la rivalité de la France et de l'Angleterre*.—Jeanne de Bourgogne was the first wife of

examples of this kind are found in history : since the establishment of Christianity, every age has furnished some of them ; and even our own offers those of the most brilliant kind.—This age has seen a man (the Marquis of Lagaraie) possessed of an immense fortune, transform his house into an hospital, and consecrate his whole life to the service of the poor. Other predestinated souls have given us still more striking examples, notwithstanding the difficulties which surround supreme power. But why do I seek for models of Christianity at such a distance ? your Highness has them incessantly before your eyes, as affecting to you as they are sublime ; with what respect and attachment ought they to inspire you, for the religion which produces them ! Do not we ourselves see every day, in situations as respectable as they are obscure, every thing which ought to dispose us to revere and cherish so holy a religion ? In vain should we seek, in pagan antiquity, those numerous societies of men and women, of every age, in all our cities, which consecrated their studies, liberties, and lives, to the most painful cares. Could philosophers find examples, in the Greek or Roman histories, of these holy associations, formed in favour of suffering humanity, how prodigal would they be of their eulogiums on this supernatural beneficence ! How they would be surprised, that a weak and delicate sex should be capable of surmounting disgusts and difficulties which seem invincible ; of bearing the sight of nauseous objects, at which even the senses revolt ; of triumphing over the compassion which conducts and animates them ; or, to express myself more clearly, not to feel this sentiment but with a male energy, without any mixture of fear or weakness ; and, finally, to know pity only by what

of Philippe of Valois. The king's respect for this pious princess was so great, as to associate her in some degree to royal power ; he consulted her on every affair. Many letters and charters of this reign contain the following clause : *De l'avis et volonté de la reine, sa chere épouse.* Histoire de la rivalité de la France, &c.

it inspires of useful and sublime ! Yet these very philosophers see, without admiration, the sisters of the Charity * continually exercise among us these sacred functions ; they see them seek, receive, succour, watch, and take care of the unfortunate ; dress the wounds of the poor ; console and nurse them with an ingenious address, an heroic courage, a mildness, a patience, which nothing discourages. Wandering, active, indefatigable, they have no fixed habitation ; they go where humanity calls them ; they are where illness and pain implore their succour ; sometimes in prisons and hospitals, at others under thatched roofs ; they are frequently called to palaces ; being voluntarily devoted to poverty, they despise wealth ; but they give to the suffering rich the most pure and disinterested cares ; they refuse all the offers of the gratitude they inspire ; to offer them the most trifling recompence, would, in their opinion, be an outrage. Such is Christian charity ! such are the works to which it is, without remission, consecrated, in the abode even of luxury and corruption ! All the other moral virtues are the same ; religion only can purify and render them truly solid, and give a reasonable motive to the most useful of them all—resignation to the decrees of Providence.—I do not wonder, that so many ancient and modern philosophers have an apology for suicide. I am no more astonished, that this crime, for twenty years past, has been so common in France. This calamity is a necessary consequence of irreligion. How is it possible to prove to an unbeliever, that he ought to preserve the existence he abhors ? If he has lost every object which attached him to life ; if injustice and oppression have destroyed in his heart ambition, the desire of serving his country, and of being useful to mankind ; what reasons can be employed to prevent his disengaging himself from an insupportable burthen ? Why, therefore, should a man abandon himself, when he attributes

* A religious female order in France. TRANSLATOR.

his ills to fatality, when he neither acknowledges a providence, or a sovereign and supreme authority? What signifies this phrase, in which there is not common sense, *We must yield to necessity*? Why, replies the impious, should I submit, when I can revolt, and terminate my sufferings? It is a crime, you say; what signifies that to me, since it is to go unpunished?—How can such reasonings be combated? If you agree, that eternal punishment will not follow this crime, all your efforts to turn him from it will be vain and superfluous. No, without religion, there are evils which would inevitably throw the sensible mind into that horrid despondency which leads to suicide. What power can philosophy have over a wounded heart, which regrets the object of its most tender affection? What, then, can even the cares of friendship do, in those frightful moments, when the mind is wholly absorbed with grief? Can the vain exhortations of men prevent despair? Ah, no! It is not frivolous counsels, it is a sovereign order only which can make us submit; God himself must deign to fortify and support; less consolation would be too weak for such sufferings. It is when speaking to the unfortunate, that religion is particularly sublime: far from forbidding them a reasonable regret, it approves of and sanctifies it. ‘Dare not to murmur,’ says it to the unhappy man, ‘against those sacred decrees, which thy reason cannot comprehend. But weep, for thou mayest do it: carry an humble grief to the foot of the altar; and he in whom omnipotence, supreme justice, and unchangeable goodness, are joined, will himself become thy support and comforter. Thy tears, shed into his paternal bosom, will never be in vain; he will soften the bitterness of them. Men will offer thee but a barren and transient pity; if thy grief continue, they will at length look upon it with indifference: they feel only for violent and momentary evils: time destroys in them the most natural compassion;—but God is at all times the tender father and friend of those who are faithful to him; pours down his bene-

‘factions

‘ factions upon them, and proportions to their wants
 ‘ the succours he affords.’—For this reason, in those
 sufferings which distract the mind, resignation is im-
 possible, and even unreasonable, but when inspired by
 religion.

After the exposition of these simple but striking
 truths, your Highness will comprehend, that the
 atheist, born with a susceptible and generous mind,
 may have goodness, and do some bright and praise-
 worthy actions; but that the Christian only can be
 constantly pure, courageous, resigned, and beneficent:
 finally, that in him alone can be seen a model of solid
 virtue; and so much the more perfect, as, far from
 seeking, he fears the approbation of men, and acts but
 for his conscience and his God.

C H A P. XX.

IF WE HAVE A PRECISE IDEA OF WHAT
A PHILOSOPHER IS.

WE cannot reasonably esteem a thing before we have a clear and distinct idea of it. *Philosophy* has never been so much spoken and boasted of as at present. When it is intended to praise a book, it is said to be *philosophically* written; but if, on the contrary, we are willing to depreciate it, this sentence is sufficient; *The author does not write like a philosopher.* A young man, who leaves college, or returns from his first journey to London, knows already that it is necessary to shew some *philosophy*, and think *philosophically*. He has studied men, like a *philosopher*, at Newmarket races, and at Ranelagh, and daily congratulates himself on being born in so *philosophical* an age. His parents and preceptors have undoubtedly given him a good deal of learning; but yet I doubt whether he could give a satisfactory answer to these two simple questions; *What is philosophy? What is a philosopher?*

I entered the world very young; I was very curious, and had a great desire to gain instruction. The words *philosophy*, and *philosopher*, constantly struck my ears; but I asked in vain for a definition of them. The answers I received, and the examples I saw, only served to increase my incertitude and ignorance. I heard a number of persons, who had no conformity of principles, conduct, or opinions among them, called *philosophers*. I observed, that this title was indiscriminately given to the atheist, the deist, the misanthrope, the man of the world; and to him even who laughed at every kind of decency, and shewed the most contempt for morality. Thus I saw evidently, that wisdom, and the qualities of the mind, had nothing in common with philosophy. The diversity of opinions in philosophers still proved, that if they sought for truth, they were

no

no farther advanced in it than the generality of men. I concluded from this, that prejudices and ignorance only could give a philosophical reputation, since it had neither truth or virtue for its basis: nevertheless, I always sought after its characteristic marks. I thought, for a moment, that this distinguishing quality consisted in a study of the sciences in general; for those called *philosophers* were people known by their works of this kind only, chymists, geometricians, natural philosophers, antiquarians, &c.: but I soon discovered my error, on reflecting, that certain poets, and certain superficial and very ignorant wits, were universally called *philosophers*. Moreover, it was unanimously agreed, that a man without erudition, and even without any literature, might be a *philosopher*. But what then, said I, is philosophy? what constitutes, what distinguishes it? It is neither wisdom, nor virtue, nor a particular manner of life, nor science, nor talents. What, therefore, can it be? If you wish I should esteem it, define it to me; give me a precise idea of it. *A philosopher is a man without prejudices*, was the answer I received.—Without prejudices!—and you agree, that a philosopher, even a great one, may have strong passions, false ideas, and adopt or create extravagant systems; dare a man, who abandons himself to error, boast of being exempt from prejudices? Seneca and Pliny, who had faith in dreams and presages, were famous philosophers. Was Julian the apostate, debased by the most abominable superstitions, a philosopher without prejudices? But why seek for examples in antiquity; modern history furnishes us with a great number of them. Shall we look upon those men as sages, who were called philosophers in their ages and our own, and who believed in sylphs, gnomes*, and all the mysteries of the Cabal†? and the famous philosopher

* Certain invisible people, who, according to the Cabalists, inhabit the inner part of the earth. They are supposed small in stature, and the guardians of quarries and mines. TRANSLATOR.

† The name of a mysterious kind of science, pretended by the Rabbins to have been delivered by revelation to the

lofopher Milanois Cardan *, was he without prejudices, he who believed in prediction and magic ? (6).

It is impossible to answer to these objections. Well, said they, a philosopher *is a moralist*, a man who may conduct himself badly, but who gives good principles of conduct.—But the philosopher Copernicus, and many other learned men, who are called philosophers, were *by no means* moralists. The philosophers Spinoza, Hobbes, Bayle (7), and all the philosophers who were their partisans, have left us abominable *precepts*, which tend to destroy all the principles of morality. Moreover, if it were true, that a philosopher was *a moralist*, a man who knew how to give excellent rules of conduct, all our great preachers would be ranked among philosophers; and, on the contrary, I hear it repeated, that Fenelon, Bourdaloue, and Maffillon, were not philosophers. I am sorry for philosophy on this account; for it would be respectable in the eyes of every body, if it presented, in some few of its disciples, such an admirable union of superior talents and sublime virtues; and I will venture to add, that the title which has been refused to these men cannot be an honourable one.

It was in this manner, MONSEIGNEUR, that I vainly sought certain lights upon modern philosophy. At length I found a person, both well informed and sincere, who wished to instruct me. One thing, said he to me, characterises a philosopher at present; this is *impiety*. A man, dishonoured like the famous Bacon †, may preserve the title of philosopher: folly, ignorance, wick-

the ancient Jews, and transmitted, by oral tradition, to those of the present time; serving for the interpretation of the books both of nature and scripture.

TRANSLATOR.

* Born in 1508. It is he who took this fine motto; *Tempus mea possessio, tempus ager meus*. Time is my possession; the field I cultivate.

† Francis Bacon, of Verulam, who died in 1626. He was chancellor of England; and, being accused of malversation, was condemned to pay a fine, and deprived of all his offices.

cdnefs,

edness, and depravity of morals, may be allied, and really accord daily with philosophy; but it seems to be thought necessary to make irreligion public, to deny openly revelation and eternal punishments: nothing more than these are required of incredulity; for, otherwise, philosophers are permitted to believe every extravagance produced by impostors. A philosopher must reject the prophecies and miracles of the Gospel; but he is at liberty to believe the *predictions of sleepwalkers*, and not to have a doubt about the prodigies performed by magnetism and the magician's wand.—This definition fixed my opinion invariably on modern philosophy; but wishing to know particularly ancient philosophy, I had recourse to history. I soon perceived that philosophy was not a vague title, and a word void of sense, in antiquity; it was then given to none but the heads of different sects, and their disciples. In those times, a clear and precise definition of *philosophy* could be given: it was, as the word expresses it, *a love of wisdom*. Men born in the dark ages of paganism, and guided by their natural light only, could not but err; but they had at least a virtuous motive. Their errors are entitled to great indulgence, and their useful researches are worthy of high admiration. I am not surprized, that the morals of Socrates were depraved. I find the apology of his errors in his religion, and the irregularities of the false deities he worshipped: but I read with astonishment the detail of his opinions on the duties of men in general*. It appears to me very natural, that, among the various systems produced by ancient philosophy, many of them should be extravagant and pernicious, and not even one either useful or reasonable; but on this account I admire more the wise maxims they contain, and the glimmering rays of light which sometimes make their appearance in them.

More learned authors than myself have remarked, and proved even, that ancient philosophy, although

* Socrates never wrote; but his life and the basis of his doctrine are fully known. Plato has transmitted to us several maxims of that illustrious philosopher.

estimable in general by its proposed end, has done more harm than good to mankind. Carthage was a long time happy and flourishing, and had no philosophers; Sparta and Rome did not astonish the universe with their virtues and happiness after they knew what philosophy was: the multiplicity of sects, and diversity of opinions, formed invincible obstacles to the progress of morals. Moreover, if the first philosophers sought seriously after virtue, those who came after them seldom shewed such a purity of intention: several among them, such as the Epicureans, the Cynics, &c. had the most pernicious influence on morals; others shewed an independence and audacity which made them feared, at the same time that they exposed them to cruel persecutions: 'Therefore,' says the author *des Lettres de quelques Juifs*, 'philosophers were driven from Rome, under Domitian, as they had been under Nero. . . . They suffered the same disgrace even under the mild and moderate government of Vespasian.'—'They were the only persons,' remarks a modern writer*, 'who constrained him to treat them with a severity opposite to his inclination. The haughty maxims of Stoicism, inspired them with such a love of liberty, as bordered closely upon revolt. These doctors of sedition gave public lectures on independence: they abused, for a long time, the goodness of the prince, to sap the foundation of an authority, which they ought to have respected and cherished; and their declamations did not cease, until some of them were exiled, others shut up in the islands, and several whipped with rods, and put to death†.' What is still more, these emperors did no more in exiling the philosophers,' says Suetonius, 'than act conformably to the ancient laws framed against them: which is true; for, in the year 160 before the vulgar æra, they were banished from Rome by a decree of the senate; and the prætor, M. Pomponius, was charged to see that none of them

* Mr. Crevier.

† See M. Crevier's Roman History.

‘ remained

' remained in the city ; because they were, according
 ' to historians, looked upon as dangerous bablers, who,
 ' in reasoning upon virtue, destroyed its foundation :
 ' and as capable of changing the simplicity of ancient
 ' manners, by their vain sophisms, and of instilling in-
 ' to the minds, of youth opinions pernicious to their
 ' country. It was upon the same principles, and for
 ' the same reasons, that the elder Cato sent three phi-
 ' losophic ambassadors precipitately from Rome. . . .
 ' After this, what think you of M de Voltaire,
 ' when he coolly advances, *That history offers no instance*
 ' *wherein a philosopher opposed himself to the will of the*
 ' *prince and government ?* . . . We have omitted many
 ' facts, which would fully prove the contrary of what
 ' M. de Voltaire advances with so much assurance ;
 ' among others, the books of the philosopher Cremu-
 ' tius-Cordus, burnt by order of the Roman se-
 ' nate, &c. *

It is not surprizing, that Pagan philosophers could
 neither agree among themselves, nor render their works
 truly useful to mankind. Their religion favoured vice
 and licentiousness ; it was impossible it could serve as
 the basis of a pure and severe moral. These philoso-
 phers perceived this ; they shewed contempt for absurd
 fables ; but did not comprehend, that impiety and athe-
 ism have still more fatal inconveniences, than those
 which arise from superstition. They took away the
 fear of the gods : and what did they give in exchange
 for this salutary sentiment ? Incomprehensible systems,
 and imperfect or false definitions of virtue. If they
 had created the most ingenious systems, and given the
 sublimest lessons of virtue, had they agreed among
 themselves, they would have had but a transient influence
 on morals ; they wanted authority, to obtain from men
 the sacrifice of their passions : it is orders from Heaven,
 and not human counsels which are necessary. The ex-
 hortations of the most sublime philosophy will always
 be vain and fruitless : religion alone has the right of

* Lettres de quelques Juifs, tom. i.

commanding, and the power of enforcing obedience. Ancient philosophers are undoubtedly excusable, in not having perceived the truth of these principles: but what must we think of modern philosophers, who have sought to destroy a religion, whose moral is as sublime as it is pure? Why reject the Gospel, when the interest alone of humanity ought to cause all its salutary maxims to be adopted; when, finally, all instructions might be founded upon this solid and sacred base? Who are the greatest moralists, and who are the preceptors and benefactors of mankind? Let not these beloved and revered names be sought for among the impious and unbelieving. No; these men, whose adored memories will never perish, drew their principles, and the great lessons they have left us, from the Gospel*.

The authors of the sacred writings have drawn from the most sure lights of reason, the whole foundation of their doctrine; and traced, upon the natural destination of man, the entire plan of the system which they present him. All that the book, whose contents Christians respect as the deposit of divine revelations, proposed or commanded to men, only tends to strengthen the ties which unite them to God and society, and render infinitely dear to them all the duties which this double union imposes. In shewing man coming from the hands of God, immediately associated to a being of the same kind, whom he acknowledged as *flesh of his flesh*, and *bone of his bone*, it first discovers to us an abridgment of the œconomy of religion, which attributes every thing to God, as the eternal source and immutable center of all intelligence; and the establishment of society, as the first state of mankind, as an imperishable body, to which eternity is promised. And especially when

* Has irreligious philosophy ever produced works comparable to *l'émile*—*au petit Cécile* of Maffillon—*aux Pensées de Pascal*—to the English Spectator—the novels of Richardson, &c.? chaste works, which contain not a single page that the mother of a family would not put into the hands of her daughter.

' we see all the generations of the earth, descended from
 ' one man only, as the common father of the immortal family; we find the powerful interest of nature
 ' and blood, joined to all the motives which engage us
 ' to love mankind, and consecrate our whole power to
 ' the maintenance of order and public unity. The
 ' decalogue, of such remote antiquity, given to us
 ' by Moses, as coming from the bosom of Infinite
 ' Wisdom, contains absolutely no more than the rule of
 ' conduct which man ought to follow, to be just before
 ' God, and good towards his fellow-citizens. And in
 ' the Gospel, Christ comes to insist with new force
 ' upon these two points, which contain every thing:
 ' he makes but one precept of the love of God and
 ' men; and this precept he calls, *the first and greatest of*
 ' *all*, his own, by way of excellence. He derives,
 ' from this, the series of his morality; and has not
 ' said a single word, which tends not to make God
 ' adored in spirit and in truth, and to fill our hearts
 ' with the most generous and tender love for our brethren. He gives us as many examples as precepts, of
 ' respect and submission to higher powers. He does
 ' not even distinguish this duty from the tribute of
 ' adoration we owe to Infinite Majesty; and Cæsar is
 ' placed by the side of God himself, in the command-
 ' ment he gives of being obedient and faithful. If,
 ' therefore, it were true, that writers upon religion had
 ' given us the productions of their own minds as the
 ' oracles of God, it would ever be certain they had
 ' done good to men; that they recalled reason to its
 ' most pure principles; that they have reconducted it,
 ' as we may say, to its native country; and that, consequently, they were true and excellent philosophers.
 ' The malicious policy of the wicked can, therefore, be
 ' no more a mystery to us.'

What a philosophy is that which takes from our ills
 all their bitterness; which attaches to the sacrifice of
 personal interest, and the care of the happiness of
 others, so infinite a price as to make chagrin and inevitable calamities desirable and precious; which makes

us contemplate, without fear or regret, the decay of our bodies ; and changes the horror of the tomb, into a theatre of triumph and felicity ! ‘ And, if such high ideas carried not with them a clear attestation of their emanation from the eternal Source of all Light, who is that man, if he knows himself, who does not adopt them as the real necessity of his reason, and embrace them as the only support of his heart ? In vain does duplicity agitate and torment itself to obscure their truth. That which so far surpasses all understanding, cannot be a dream of the human mind ; that which excites us to so much good, cannot be the work of an impostor*.’

One of our most celebrated modern philosophers, J. J. Rousseau, has, like many others, written against several articles of our faith, which the Gospel commands us to believe ; and, by an incoherence difficult to conceive, he seems forcibly to perceive all the utility of the evangelical precepts.

‘ We are all become doctors,’ says he, ‘ and have ceased to be Christians. No ; it is not with so much art that the Gospel has been extended over the universe, and that its ravishing beauty has penetrated mens hearts. This divine book, the only one necessary to a Christian, and the most useful to those even who are not so, needs only to be meditated upon, to fill the soul with love to its author, and a willingness to accomplish his precepts. Never was the language of virtue so sweet ; never did the most profound wisdom express itself with such energy and simplicity ! We cannot leave off reading it, without finding our-

* *Pensées sur la Philosophie de l'Incredulité.* This work, dedicated to MONSIEUR (a title, in France, given to the king's next brother), is in every respect worthy of the protection of a great prince, a just estimator of merit and talent : it is in one volume. It were to be wished this book might be read by young people, just ready to enter into the world. It is, moreover, as interesting as instructive ; the style is energetic and rapid ; the reasoning very forcible and it contains many passages highly distinguished and beautiful.

‘ selves

selves better than before *. . . . It is said of the
 califf Omar, that, being asked what should be done
 with the library of Alexandria? he answered, If those
 books contain things opposite to the Alcoran, they
 are bad, and ought to be burnt; if they contain no-
 thing but the doctrine of the Alcoran, still let them
 be burnt, for they are superfluous.—The learned
 have quoted this reasoning, as the highest degree of
 absurdity. Nevertheless, let us suppose Gregory the
 Great in the place of Omar, and the Gospel in that
 of the Alcoran, the library would equally have been
 destroyed, which would perhaps have been the finest
 action of the life of that illustrious pontiff. . . . What
 ought we to think of the swarm of obscure writers,
 and idle men of letters, who uselessly devour the
 substance of the state? Idle, do I say? Would to
 God they were really so! Morality would be more
 pure, and society more peaceful. But these vain and
 futile declaimers go every where, armed with their
 pernicious paradoxes, sapping the foundation of faith,
 and annihilating virtue; they smile disdainfully at the
 old-fashioned words, Country and Religion, and con-
 secrate their philosophy to abase and destroy every
 thing held sacred among men: not that they really
 hate either virtue or our dogmas; it is to public opi-
 nion they are enemies: exiling them among atheists,
 would be sufficient to bring them back to the foot of
 the altar. O rage of being particular, what can it
 not do †!

Is it conceivable, that a man who spoke thus of the
 Gospel, and appeared to be strongly interested in fa-
 vour of morality, should have written *la nouvelle He-
 loïse*; and so frequently, and in various manners, have
sapped the foundations of faith. It is here we may justly
 exclaim with him, *O the rage of being particular, what
 can it not do!*

* Réponse de J. J. Rousseau au Roi de Pologne, sur la
 Critique de son Discours sur les Sciences.

† J. J. Rousseau. Discourse which gained the premium
 at the academy of Dijon.

It

It is still the same writer, who, in his *Emile*, has made so fine an eulogium on the Gospel. This discourse is too celebrated, and worthy of being so, not to have a place here.

‘ I confess to you, the majesty of scripture astonishes me; the holiness of the Gospel speaks to my heart. See how little are the books of philosophers, with all their pomp, when compared to the evangelists! Is it possible that a book, at once so sublime and simple, should be the work of man? Is it possible that He, whose history it contains, should himself be but a man? Is there in him the tone of an enthusiast, or an ambitious sectary? What mildness, what purity in his manners! what affecting grace in his instructions! what elevation in his maxims! what profound wisdom in his discourses! what presence of mind, what ingenuity in his answers! what empire over the passions! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, suffer, and die, without weakness or ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary just man, covered with all the opprobrium of crimes, and worthy of all the reward of virtue, he described our Saviour, feature by feature: the resemblance is so striking, that all the fathers of the church have seen it was impossible to mistake it. . . . Before Socrates had praised sobriety, before he had defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men; but where had Christ learned that elevated and pure morality, of which he alone has given the precepts and the example? . . . If the life and death of Socrates be those of a sage; the life and death of Christ are those of a God. Shall we say, that the evangelical history was invented at pleasure? It is not in this manner, my good friend, that men invent; and the actions of Socrates are less attested than those of Jesus Christ. Upon the whole, it is removing the difficulty without destroying it. It would be more inconceivable that several men, agreed among themselves, should have invented this book, than it is that one man only has furnished the subject

Vol. II. K of

' of it. . . . And the evangelists have such grand,
 ' striking, and inimitable characters of truth, that the
 ' inventor would be still more astonishing than the hero.
 Will your Highness believe, that the man who made
 this confession of faith, has terminated the same dis-
 course, by declaring himself to have fallen into an *in-*
voluntary scepticism, from which he cannot recover. Is
 this result of such a discourse conceivable? Should your
 Highness wish to know the opinion a great philosopher,
 of the present age, had of his cotemporary philoso-
 phers, hearken again to J. J. Rousseau. It is in this
 manner he describes all the chiefs, and their parti-
 sans :

' They are haughty, affirmative, and dogmatical ;
 ' pretending to know every thing, and proving no-
 ' thing ; laughing at each other ; and this common
 ' point appears to me the only one in which they are
 ' all right. . . . Truth, say they, is never preju-
 ' dicial to men ; I believe so too : and this is, in my
 ' opinion, a great proof, that what they teach is not
 ' the truth. . . . One of the most familiar sophisms
 ' of the philosophical party, is, to oppose a people of
 ' supposed good philosophers, to a people who are bad
 ' Christians ; as if a people of true philosophers were
 ' more easy to make, than a people of true Christians.
 ' . . . It remains to be known, if philosophy, at ease
 ' and upon the throne, would restrain the vain-glory,
 ' interest, ambition, and little passions of man ; and if
 ' it would practise well that lenient humanity which it
 ' extols with its pen. . . . By these principles,
 ' philosophy can do nothing good, which religion does
 ' not do still better ; and religion does many good
 ' things which philosophy cannot do. . . . Crimes
 ' committed among the clergy, as well as elsewhere,
 ' prove not that religion is useless, but that very few
 ' people have any. The solid authority of modern go-
 ' vernments, and less frequent revolutions, are incon-
 ' testably due to Christianity : it has rendered govern-
 ' ments themselves less sanguinary ; this is proved by
 ' facts, on comparing them with ancient governments.
 ' Religion,

* Religion, better understood, excluding fanaticism,
 * has given more mildness to Christian manners. This
 * change is not the work of letters; for wherever
 * they have flourished, humanity has not been more
 * respected on their account: of which the cruelties
 * of the Athenians, of the Egyptians, of the Roman
 * emperors, and of the Chinese, are so many proofs.
 * What acts of clemency are the works of the Gospel!
 * What restitutions and reparations does not confession
 * produce among the Catholics! . . . Were philoso-
 * phers in a situation to discover truth, who among
 * them would interest himself in its behalf? Each of
 * them well knows that his system is not better found-
 * ed than those of others; but he supports it because
 * it is his. There is not one of them, who, having
 * found truth and falsehood, would not prefer the
 * lye he had adopted, to truth discovered by another.
 * Where is the philosopher who, for his own glory,
 * would not deceive mankind? . . . The essential point
 * is to think differently from others. With believers,
 * he is an atheist; with atheists he would be a believer.
 * . . . Avoid those who, under the pretence of ex-
 * plaining nature, sow desolating doctrines in the hearts
 * of men; and whose apparent scepticism is an hundred
 * times more affirmative and dogmatical than the de-
 * cided tone of their adversaries. Under the haughty
 * pretence, that they only are enlightened, true, and
 * sincere, they imperiously subject us to their opposite
 * decisions; and pretend to give us, for real principles
 * of things, the unintelligible systems of their own
 * imaginations. Moreover, by overturning, destroying,
 * and treading under foot, every thing respected by
 * men, they deprive the afflicted of the last consolation
 * of their misery, and take from the rich and powerful
 * the only bridle of their passions; they snatch from
 * the heart both the remorse of crime, and hope of
 * virtue; and still boast of being the benefactors of
 * mankind *.

* Emile.

‘ It is a dreadful thing for philosophy, that in the
 ‘ midst of renowned Greece, the time when virtue
 ‘ was the most pure and lasting, was precisely that
 ‘ when there were no philosophers. Spartan manners
 ‘ were always proposed as examples to the states of
 ‘ Greece: all Greece became corrupted, and there
 ‘ still remained some virtue in Sparta: Greece was
 ‘ enslaved, and Sparta still remained free. . . . What is
 ‘ philosophy? What do the writings of the most known
 ‘ philosophers contain? What are the lessons of these
 ‘ friends of wisdom? To hear them, would not they
 ‘ be taken for a troop of quacks, each crying out,
 ‘ from his own quarter, in a public place, Come to
 ‘ me, I am the only person who does not cheat? One
 ‘ pretends there are no bodies, and that all is *repre-*
 ‘ *sentation*; another that there is no substance but mat-
 ‘ ter, nor any other God than the world. This ad-
 ‘ vances, there are neither virtues nor vices, and that
 ‘ moral good and evil are chimeras; the other, that
 ‘ men are wolves, and may devour each other in all
 ‘ consciential safety. Oh, great philosophers! why
 ‘ do not you reserve for your friends and children these
 ‘ instructive lessons? you would soon receive the reward
 ‘ of them, and we should not be afraid of finding
 ‘ among our own any of your sectators*.’

I do not speak to your Highness of philosophy and
 philosophers; what signifies the opinion of a woman
 upon so grave a subject? But the evidence of a great
 philosopher cannot, in that respect, appear to you
 frivolous or suspicious.

* *Discourse which gained the premium at the academy of
 Dijon.*—Add to these quotations, taken from the works of
 Rousseau, *le Dialogue de l'Inspiré et du Raisonneur*; that
*du Profelitte et du Missionnaire, la Profession de Foi de Vicar
 Savoyard*; and it will be agreed, that it is impossible to
 carry incoherence to a greater degree. I have placed, at
 the end of this work, some reflections, which appeared to
 me to be new, on this celebrated writer; and on the in-
 fluence which his works have had on education and morals.
See the end of the volume, Note 8.

Besides,

Besides, Rousseau is not the first modern philosopher who made an eulogium on the Gospel, in attacking its most important truths. It is in vain we ask philosophers, why they wish to destroy that which they themselves judge to be so useful and worthy of admiration? they reply to this, That they write for nothing but the *good of humanity*; which does not appear a very satisfactory answer.

M. de Voltaire, who shewed so much contempt for revelation, makes a remarkable declaration, in speaking of the future destiny of man.

- ' La nature est muette, on l'interroge en vain,
- ' On a besoin d'un Dieu qui parle au genre humain :
- ' Il n'appartient qu'à lui d'expliquer son ouvrage,
- ' De consoler le foible et d'éclairer le sage.'

Every man, in whom talents and the love of humanity have been united, has shewn the most lively indignation against impious writers. M. Thomas has composed a work, *pour venger l'auguste religion de nos peres, des attaques de cette philosophie orgueilleuse, qui voudroit élever sur ses débris, la religion naturelle*—to revenge the august religion of our forefathers, from the attacks of that proud philosophy which wishes to found natural religion upon its ruins. Duclos, in his *Considerations sur les Mœurs*, says, in speaking of impious writers, *that, without their excesses, they would never have been compared to those wretches, whose situation condemns them to darkness, and whose names are never announced to the public, but when attached to their crimes and punishment* *.

The Abbé Arnaud does not express himself with less energy, in a printed letter: *It is singular*, says he,

* Nothing is more just than this thought, which is so ingeniously expressed, except with respect to M. de Voltaire, who had a real superiority of mind: all the other detractors of religion resemble the madman, who, having no pretension to fame, and desiring a vain celebrity, burnt the temple of Ephesus, to immortalize his name.

that it should be from the bosom of the republic of letters, that maxims the most pernicious to the tranquillity of the state are at present issued. Most of our writers pretend to be legislators, and shamelessly depart from the respect due to the sanctity of the laws, to clothe it with their deliriums and extravagancies. The means which little and vain philosophers have made use of to gain esteem unawares, have been discovered, and they are now covered with that humiliation and contempt to which they wished to reduce every thing the most respectable and sacred among men.

A modern author has just supported, with equal ability, courage, method, and reason, the rights and cause of sound judgment, morals, and religion. He asks this question, relative to Livy: ‘ If his infancy had been enlightened by the Gospel, can it be believed that, with the excellent parts and fine judgment with which he was endowed, he would have imitated these pretended historians and audacious writers, who, equally incensed against the throne and the altar, strive to overturn both one and the other; breaking, with the same stroke, the sceptre and the censer; and wishing to live independent of heaven and earth? An infidel like themselves in fact, a sophist in his reasonings, audacious in his thoughts, rash in his reflections, always incoherent and superficial; would he, like them, have employed falsehood, the most bitter sarcasms, and vulgarest pleasantries, against a religion, whose divine origin every thing proves and demonstrates * ?’

From all this, your Highness may conclude, that the inconceivable incoherence of modern pretended philosophers would alone be sufficient to render their writings, and pernicious opinions, extremely contemptible. You perceive, they constantly contradict themselves; that they equally want principles, reason, and common honesty: you find that philosophy has never

* De la Décadence des Lettres et des Mœurs depuis les Grecs, et les Romains, jusqu’à nos jours, par M. RIGOLEY DE JUVIGAY.

been really useful to mankind; that, in all ages, it has produced errors and frightful absurdities; and caused, in our own time, the most destructive revolution: finally, your Highness may have observed, that if, by philosophy, there be understood a *love of wisdom*, a desire to enlighten men, to make them better, this definition can agree but with that philosophy whose principles are taken from the Gospel. The sensible, well-informed, and reasonable man, who is desirous of well-doing, and sincerely wishes to give useful lessons to mankind, will always arm himself with this supreme authority, and rest upon its sacred and immovable basis. In a word, the sublime moral of the Gospel renders true philosophy inseparable from religion. Yet I will not say to your Highness, with J. J. Rousseau, *Shun those who affect a pernicious scepticism*; but, *Fly from those who trample upon every thing respected by men*. Religion will give you more mild and moderate counsels: ever indulgent, it inspires no violent emotions of contempt and hatred, which pride only produces; its virtuous indignation never resembles disdain: it inclines us to pity the impious and wicked; but with a sincere and modest compassion, which never exposes itself to public view, and has nothing in it insulting. Far from ostentatiously exclaiming, *Shun the perverse man*; it says, *Bear with him; learn to live with him, if it be necessary; and be particularly careful, neither to offend nor hate him*. Therefore, should your Highness hereafter meet with partisans of false philosophy, shew them not a puerile animosity; do justice to their good qualities, and live peaceably with them, compassionating their errors from the bottom of your heart. Born to love arts and letters, you will certainly give no particular and distinguished protection, but to persons in whom talents and virtues shall be united. It is then munificence will be truly honourable: with this discernment, and knowledge, you will give something more valuable than gratifications; you may offer recom-
pences.

C H A P. XXI.

OF PHILOSOPHICAL PREJUDICES.

I HAVE constantly seen philosophers laugh at the prejudices of those *who had no philosophy*. For twenty years past, that I have been in the world, and studied the characters and manners of the people who compose society, I have found no deep and rooted prejudices, really dangerous and prejudicial, but among philosophers. The prejudices with which women are reproached, and those of the people, do no harm to any body; they are puerile and unreasonable, like all others, but they are at least innocent. What signifies it to society, that we are alarmed at the sight of an over-turned salt-cellar; that we look upon Friday as an ill-omened day; that we attribute great virtues to a dry toad; or that a peasant calls certain meteors, jack o' lanterns, a *Will with the wisp*, &c.? Prejudices of this kind are easily destroyed. I have seen young people who have had such from their infancy, and afterwards lose them in a few days. The prejudices of plain and simple people are never deeply rooted; but those of vain and haughty minds are always incurable evils.

I will not speak of all the prejudices with which modern philosophers might be reproached; such a detail would be too long and trifling: I will mention those only with which I have been most struck.

We find continually, in their writings, the most false ideas of *kings, princes, courtiers, and courts*.—Their portraits of courtiers represent nothing more real than those of the valets and abigails of comedy, whose originals would be vainly sought for in society: they imagine courtiers to be vain adulators; and princes, ungrateful, and unsusceptible of the pleasures of friendship. Most assuredly, I do not believe flattery
to

to be banished from courts; but I assert, that it is not so indelicate, nor so much lavished, as philosophers pretend. They have nearly the same prejudices, with respect to every other class of society: they describe men to be a thousand times more vicious and wicked than they are. Two things, very opposite to each other, seem united in their writings; an Epicurean moral, and misanthropy. Pride and irreligion must produce this strange assemblage, when principles are wanting. When man thinks himself a privileged being, he is guided by the allurements of pleasure only; when he supposes himself superior to others, he despises the human species, and gives way to his humour, to the prejudices and secret malice inspired by excessive vanity, which every thing irritates, and nothing can satisfy. If all these philosophical works had but this one defect, of false representations, or such as were much exaggerated, they would still be dangerous. Men convey no instruction by giving their prejudices as so many certain lights; they do not excite beneficence and humanity by making mankind hated.

I have already spoken, in the preceding chapter, of the extended meaning philosophers give to this axiom: *That no power has a right to restrain the liberty of thinking.* We have seen that they mean, by *liberty of thinking*, that of speaking, acting, and writing, of spreading and publishing all their systems. This opinion, on liberty of thinking, does not arise from their prejudices; they had their reasons for striving to establish it: I have given a detail of them. But their ideas on what constitutes the liberty of man in general, and on the dignity of philosophical liberty, hold to prejudices infinitely pernicious to society. They seem persuaded, that the most legal authority is but an usurpation: hence the numerous seditious principles scattered throughout their works. Finally, their ideas on the price which each individual ought to attach to his personal liberty, are so false and reprehensible, that the most severe criticism we can give thereon, will be to expose them to view.—According to their principles,

there is no interior peace, no honour, *no happiness without liberty*.—A man who abandons his liberty, disgraces himself; and, in losing the *energy of his character*, must soon have all the vices which lead to *slavery*.—An elevated mind, *penetrated with the sentiment of its greatness*, must prefer liberty to fortune, consideration, and honours: these are highly polished chains, but no light ones.—*Liberty and repose*; these are the only desirable possessions, &c. &c.—Such are the pompous eulogiums which modern philosophy has, for twenty years past, lavished with so much emphasis upon liberty and repose: but what is this precious liberty? I am not dazzled with phrases; I wish for a definition, but ask for it in vain from philosophers: they are accustomed to answer by exclamations and sentences; they decide and judge despotically, but define nothing. It is with this method they have seduced and led astray the unwary. Reason requires a knowledge of what is vaunted before it can admire. The curious and superficial multitude desires passionately without examination, and has ever been the faithful echo of enthusiasts, and hypocrites; and therefore has constantly repeated, that *philosophy is the true source of light*, and that *repose and liberty are the real possessions of man*, without having taken the pains to ask what *philosophy* was, or in what *repose and philosophical liberty* consisted? The books of philosophers, the principles they contain, the results of these principles, and the study of their morals, may do instead of the precise definitions which are wanting. We have seen a philosopher refuse to preside over the education of a foreign prince, destined to reign over vast dominions; he did not give for excuse his want of abilities, still less the love of his country (a philosopher's country is the whole universe); but he pronounced these sacred words: *My liberty, the liberty of a philosopher!*—and those of his party admired and celebrated his refusal. 'Let this problem be proposed; *To find an infallible method of destroying every notion of justice, virtue, and duty*; and the solution is as follows: *Discourage and make men blind to the relations which bind them to foreign objects,*

* *objects, and let each believe himself his unity and end.*
 * This is the tomb of every religious and moral idea,
 * and consequently the ruin of every principle and moral obligation. Who has wished to prepare this tomb,
 * and cause this ruin? Take up the books of philosophers; read, and judge *.

I knew a philosopher, in whom distinguished talents were joined to a mild and virtuous character; his situation was not happy: he confined himself to absolute necessities, to give subsistence to two infirm sisters, of whom he was the only support. He lived alone in a little house near Paris. Some persons, sensible of his merit, endeavoured successfully to find the means of changing his situation; they procured him the offer of an honourable and lucrative employ, which he obstinately refused, to *preserve his liberty*: yet this liberty, so dear to him, did not render him happy; he was extremely melancholy, was sensibly affected by his miserable state, and frequently complained of it bitterly. How can you refuse a genteel fortune, said somebody to him, which will give you the means of doing still more good? you may add to the happiness of your relations, and administer comfort to the poor; moreover, your mind will be engaged; the employment which has been proposed to you, requires knowledge and probity; your abilities will become useful: in your present retirement, they are lost to your country; ought you not to serve it as much as circumstances will permit?—I am free, I will forge myself no chains.—But have not you, at your birth, contracted an obligation to do all the service in your power to the society of which you are a member?—I live a retired life; I expect nothing from mankind; I ask them for nothing; they have no right to make an attempt upon my liberty.—You receive their favours, and refuse them your zeal. Do not you live under the protection of the laws they have established? Do not these laws insure your safety and tranquility? They would punish those who should

* *Pensées sur la Philosophie de l'Incredulité.*

deprive

deprive you of them. Is it just, that you should enjoy all the rights of a citizen, and disdain to fulfil his duties? Certainly not. Man was not formed to cherish that idleness which you call *repose*; to abandon himself to that cruel egotism which you call *liberty*. Created weak as he is, sensible, and rational, he knows not how to enjoy his existence independent of society, nor to repel the natural instinct which inclines him to assist his fellow-creatures. If pride has not vitiated his reason, every thing proves to him, that he cannot live without a support: if his heart be not corrupted, he has an ardent desire to become useful, and to make a return for that which he is forced to accept. The necessity of obliging ennobles, in his eyes, the need he has of others: he is destined to give and receive. Admirable order, which has formed society, and all the connections which insure its solidity, power, and charms!—Notwithstanding what you say, I will accept no employ which would force me to quit my solitude: What should I do in the great world? to please there, you must be vicious; none but men of intrigue, and rascals, succeed in it: a man gains no promotion therein but by baseness.—*More philosophical prejudices.* Have you attentively studied the world, which you paint in such black colours? No, it is not in the bosom of solitude, nor even in the circles of the literati, that men learn to know it. Many vices, it is true, are found in the world; many irregularities, and things ridiculous; but there are also seen great examples of virtue in every class. I agree, that intrigue frequently leads to fortune; but, in general, vice and bad actions are obstacles to it; whilst consideration and honour are always the reward of a noble and virtuous conduct, united to talents. Great employs are commonly given to men of merit or reputation; and beneficent authority consults, in every important choice, the opinion of the public. Finally, deceit and meanness are detested in the great world, as well as at court; and I have seen, between wits and *philosophers*, much more cruel rivalities

ities and enmities, more ridiculous scenes, more frequent atrocities, than there ever were among courtiers.

Pray tell me, if you think your virtue consists but in circumstances, in the kind of life you lead? Certainly it does not; you would have been virtuous in whatever state fate had placed you. How, therefore, can you think that birth, fortune, and honours, must necessarily pervert all other men? The wicked man is consistent, when he expects nothing but heinousness and perfidy from others; but the wise man finds in the bottom of his heart a sure preservative against misanthropy: he does not believe himself an only being in nature, and his own virtue attaches him to humanity.

—All these reasonings could not overcome his philosophy; nothing could conquer his obstinacy: he said he would remain free, *live for himself only*, and die in repose. About this time, he refused to marry a rich and amiable widow, who loved him: he could not resolve to *sacrifice to her his liberty*. This was a sincere philosopher, which it is rare to meet with; in general their prejudices resist reason, but yield to interest. He was a victim to his philosophical systems: he died young, of a consumption, repeating, that *liberty is the most precious of all possessions*; these were his last words. He left a work, in manuscript, *against the celibacy of the clergy*; in which he attempted to prove, that all the religious orders ought to be abolished, because none but *useful citizens* should be suffered in the state.—There appears but little conformity between the principles of this philosopher and his conduct; but such philosophical incoherences are too common to make any impression; besides, the pretended inutility of the members of religious orders is one of the prejudices which modern philosophy has published to the world. It has been long since proved, that, in general, ecclesiastics are very useful citizens, by the beneficent employment, which decency alone, in their profession, obliges them to make of their riches. I have been in every province of France, and I never found a poor person upon any of the estates possessed by the ecclesiastics. I observed, that

that agriculture flourished ; and that the peasants were more happy, and less vulgar, than in other places. Without speaking of the immense alms distributed at Paris by the archbishop and his vicars, how many millions of poor receive succour, and labourers encouragement, throughout the whole kingdom, from the ministers of the church ! If ecclesiastics follow strictly the obligations which their profession imposes on them, their charity is unbounded ; and when even they do not observe them with a scrupulous exactness, they still give more alms upon their estates than any secular proprietors. Ostentation is forbidden them : it is for them an injury and a ridicule : it is ostentation, especially, which produces avarice and hardness of heart : not being permitted to make themselves remarkable by luxury and magnificence, ecclesiastics can have but one sort of vanity, the only one which can make them respected, that of distinguishing themselves by their virtues : there is one particularly required of them, this is charity. Public opinion, honour, religion, all make humanity and charity indispensable in them. Let it be again considered how useful ecclesiastics are, by the instructions they give, and the principles they teach. What would become of the country people ; to what frightful vices would they not be abandoned, if they were deprived of the exhortations of their pastors ? Could the ministers of the church be replaced by philosophers ? In this case, we should most probably see strange revolutions ; and that *the principles of equality, and love of liberty*, would liberate peasants and labourers from that profound submission, which the precepts of the Gospel impose on them. Finally, how great obligations have letters and sciences to many religious orders, whose laborious researches have produced many learned and useful works of every kind !

Your Highness may now judge, if philosophers be exempt from prejudices. It is good to know these unjust prepossessions, in order to guard against them. The criticism of oddities, ridicule, and vices, is not only useful in a book ; but when it is impartial, and free
from

from personality, which would render it odious, it is courageous and truly estimable : but this spirit of criticism would be equally insupportable and misplaced in society. We must ever preserve pure and invariable principles, and never betray our sentiments, in appearing to approve of that which is condemnable ; but we ought carefully to avoid all criticism and superfluous discussion. It is necessary to know how to be silent, to discover prejudices, and appreciate opinions, without uselessly combating them. Finally, in entering into society, your Highness will hope for indulgence and goodness : nothing is lost there ; therefore go into it with these dispositions ; its esteem will be particularly necessary to you : and forget not, that talents and merit never gain general suffrages, but when they are united to modesty and virtue.

C H A P. XXII.

WHETHER IT BE TRUE, THAT THE PRESENT AGE
HAS RECEIVED MANY LIGHTS FROM MODERN
PHILOSOPHY.

THANKS to *philosophy*; we are at present in an age of instruction; in an enlightened age; in a philosophical age . . . &c.—Such are the words found in every page, in most of the modern works, from folios down to periodical papers. They are repeated with emphasis and satisfaction; every young author thinks himself obliged to introduce them in a preface, to establish his reputation; and to advertise the public, that he is, like *the age he lives in*, philosophical, and without prejudices.

Let us coolly and impartially examine whether it be true, that we have such great obligations to the *philosophical sect*. We are not indebted to it for the most esteemed work of the age, l'Histoire Naturelle; its illustrious author was never of any party: he had neither competitors nor rivals, in the new career he opened to himself: posterity will give him rank apart, and place him alone in it. With respect to the other sciences, the learned are unanimously of opinion, that they all owe their progress to the discoveries of Newton (9), who was born in 1642, and whose works appeared in the last century. It is proper to remark, that this great man shewed, every instant of his life, the highest respect and attachment to religion. M. de Voltaire said of him, *that he was the greatest genius which ever existed*; and this sublime genius, superior to all others, preserved, until death, the utmost real and solid piety;—a sentiment founded upon a profound knowledge of Holy Writ, upon which he
had

had meditated, and continued to read every day, and on which he, at length, wrote a work *.

Therefore, it is not modern, pretended philosophers who can attribute to themselves the honour of the grand discoveries which have thrown so much light upon the sciences. *This philosophic age* certainly has not produced, either in arts or literature, works superior to those which illustrated the age of Lewis XIV; and yet that fine age has left us models of every kind, without having found any in the one preceding. It reformed and fixed our language, and created or improved every thing; and we, sometimes happy imitators, but always imitators, and very often inferior to our models, call our own age, exclusively, *an enlightened age*. But will it be said, or rather would it have been said fifteen years ago, that the present age has produced *the Encyclopedie*? We must be very mean, to pride ourselves so much on a compilation! and what a compilation! wherein so many important articles are omitted, as many others badly composed, and not one that can be quoted as perfectly exact and complete †! And what a style, in the passages

* The book he read most frequently was the Bible. At the end of his Chronology were found reflections upon the concord and succession of the events recorded by the evangelists, which prove, that this great philosopher and mathematician had made a particular study of the New Testament.—*Dict. de l'Avocat*.

† For three years past, I have made, with my pupils, repeated visits to our manufactories; we have already seen a great number; and, on our return from each visit, we read, in the *Encyclopedie*, a detail of the operations we have seen; and have not yet found a single article wherein a want of clearness, or exactitude, does not appear: moreover, there is no new or judicious reflection on the means and methods, which, in several manufactures, seem to be very imperfect. These defects would be still multiplied, in the eyes of those in whom a spirit of observation was joined to a knowledge of which I am totally ignorant. All the processes we have followed have, in general, appeared to me to be extremely ingenious; but I think there is among the workmen an attachment to old methods, which

sages which might have been brilliant ! How unequal ! What foolish and unseasonable remarks ! how heavy is the language * ! and, what is still worse, what principles,

which is very prejudicial to the improvement of workmanship. All the trades which bear a relation to the arts, such as that of a gold or silversmith, or a jeweller, &c. and which require a knowledge of drawing, are carried to the most desirable point of perfection, with respect to the execution ; but several means, simplified, would render the work less dear. With respect to inferior trades in general, their process is vicious, and their execution bad. These, however, are such as it would be important to improve, because they are the most useful and common. All things of little value are very badly made in France, and delightfully finished in England ; which can come only from the difference of method. It is, undoubtedly, very difficult and expensive to see, in detail, the processes of manufactures ; because, to do this well, it is necessary to obtain the confidence and good-will of the principals, to suspend the work of the manufacturers, and frequently to make them begin it again. But such of the learned, as should be desirous of composing an Encyclopedie, ought not only to possess themselves of this knowledge, but to visit industrious people, such as the Dutch, English, and Germans ; and compare their manufactures to our own, to enable them to give us, upon these subjects, interesting results and new ideas. The *Encyclopedists* have done nothing of this ; they have contented themselves with asking the different artists for details in writing, of which they have corrected the style ; and, for want of a knowledge of the trades, have frequently retrenched very necessary explanation, to substitute very useless phrases.

* For example, read (if you can) the article *Philosophe* ; it is a faithful extract from a work, as contemptible for its style, as for the principles laid down in it. The author defines the kind of happiness proper for a philosopher, in the following manner : *Il lui faut, outre le nécessaire précis, un honnête superflu nécessaire à un homme, et par lequel seul on est heureux. . . . La pauvreté nous prive du bien-être qui est le paradis du philosophe. — He should have, over and above the precise necessary, a genteel superfluity, necessary to a man, and by which alone he is happy. . . . Poverty deprives us of our well-being which is the paradise of the philosopher.* This is, at least, a style well fitted to the sentiments ; such ideas ought to be so explained. It is an abridgment of this work which forms the article *Philosophe*,

principles, what audacious impiety * ! This most voluminous and dear book that has ever been sold, is but an unshapen and rough sketch ; and, to make it useful, it would be necessary to correct, mutilate, augment, and almost entirely recompose it. Thus recomposed, it would, undoubtedly, be useful ; it would give to its reformers a just right to public esteem ; but, even then, it would be no brilliant title of honour for them. If men of genius can write a dictionary, they cannot entirely devote themselves to it, and resolve to place their *chef d'œuvres* in that frightful collection of folios, which are but rarely consulted, and never regularly read. Finally, however this work may, in future, be improved, it will never dispense those who may wish to become well informed with buying all the good books, necessary to this purpose, before an Encyclopédie was thought of. A man, who may be desirous of becoming acquainted with history, will certainly never have recourse to the extracts of the Encyclopédie. Herodotus, Homer, Diodorus of Sicily, Ovid, &c. will always be read by those who wish to know the heathen mythology. A lover of the arts, and ancient monuments, will always study Winkleman. Those who have a taste for literature, will not less learn by heart the book *DE ARTE POETICA*, and the most elegant passages of poetry in the authors of the age of Lewis XIV ; they will also be far from despising *le Traité des Etudes*, by Rollin ; and *les Judicieuses Reflexions* of the Abbé Dubois. Those who are desirous of knowing how far

Philosophe, in the Encyclopédie. This article, *so highly important*, is certainly one of the best, one of those which has been written with the most care and pretension. Judge what the others must be.

* Among others, the word *Population* may be quoted ; it has excited an universal indignation ; and, in fact, never did audaciousness and effrontery carry to a greater length indecency and impiety. It is to be supposed, that what the public has been so justly revolted at, will be suppressed in the edition now preparing for the press ; therefore I confine my criticism to the first edition, that which the authors of the work have given us.

human

human industry can be carried, will go to see the manufactures; for the most precise and clear description of a manufacture, ever so little complicated, cannot give an exact idea of it to any person whatsoever, who has not seen and followed its operations with attention. All I have just said may be applied to the sciences, natural history, chymistry, physics, astronomy, &c.: therefore, the most perfect *Encyclopédie* will never be a work of the first utility; few people will be able to purchase it, and it will not be really necessary to any body. A thing of luxury, and merely agreeable, entitles not its inventors to be looked upon as *the benefactors of mankind*, neither as men to whom *statues ought to be erected*.—AND THE PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.—This is a great phrase, but already rather antiquated. They have, according to custom, begun to admire, *sur parole*, and ended by examination; and this famous preliminary discourse is pretty generally appreciated at its just value. Eulogiums have been given to the plan and series of ideas; but every body knows, and the author himself formally declares this plan not to be his own, but that of an English philosopher*; therefore the style not only belongs to the *French Philosopher*, which is particularly that which his enemies will by no means be tempted to dispute with him. An author must forever be ranged in the most middling class of writers, when, with a good plan, and upon a subject highly interesting, and full of grandeur, he writes without fire and elevation; but is, on the contrary, diffuse, barren, and languid: nevertheless, we find, in this discourse, just ideas, good sense, and reason. The author ought to be commended even for not having assumed that ridiculous and prophetic tone which then appeared so sublime and philosophical. He must have had taste and wisdom, to despise this extravagant jargon and puerile affectation: he is, however, frigid and tiresome; but he is, at least, reasonable, and never emphatical †.

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* Bacon.

† I mean in the preliminary discourse; for it is impossible to say he has discovered any taste in his *Eloges Académiques*.

It will, perhaps, be said, that so considerable and voluminous a work as the *Encyclopédie*, must necessarily contain an infinity of errors. But why have so many volumes appeared so precipitately? Would it not have been better to have given fewer, even only one, than have presented such a number of articles to be revised? Ought sages to discover so much levity? Ought they to offer a defective essay, as a *chief d'œuvre* of human understanding; as an admirable book which may answer the purpose of all others? This strange presumption brings to recollection that of a dramatic author, much less celebrated for his talents than his excessive pride and self-love. In the preface to his *Jeanne de Naples* (a bad tragedy), he says to the reader, 'My undertaking is to produce to thee, in ten volumes, of twenty thousand verses, an universal science; but so well conceived and explained, that libraries will, in future, serve thee but as useless ornaments *.'

Not-

miques. I have quoted, in a long note, many passages from these eulogiums; these are so curious and extraordinary, that they deserve to be read.—See note 10, at the end of this volume.

* The name of this author is Magnon. His tragedy of *Jeanne de Naples* was printed in 1656. Fontenelle, *Hist. du Théâtre François*.—I think it necessary to give, in this place, the judgment of one of the authors of the *Encyclopédie* upon this work. Two booksellers wishing to give a new edition of the *Encyclopédie*, the editor of the first edition spoke to them upon the subject of the faults with which it was reproached, as follows: 'The imperfection of this work comes from a great number of different causes.—There was no time to be scrupulous in the choice of those who were employed in it. . . . Hence its inequality. . . . The *Encyclopédie* was a gulph, into which these kind of rag-gatherers threw, pell mell, an infinity of things, badly chosen, ill-digested, good, bad, and detestable; true, false, uncertain, and always incoherent and unreasonable. . . . References, which belonged to the part even in which they were employed, were neglected. . . . A refutation is often found in a place where a proof is sought for. . . . There was no exact correspondence between the discourse and the figures; to remedy this defect

Notwithstanding all these reflections, it is still repeated, from habitude, that philosophy has given lights which were wanting to the age of Lewis XIV. What does this phrase signify? Nobody is ignorant of its true meaning: it is this; *The bold ideas of philosophers, on the Divinity, the nature of man, fatality, worship, and natural religion, have taught men to think and reason. The authors of the last century could not know these opinions: had they done it, they would not have failed to adopt them. But, deprived of these lights, they were given up to prejudices: finally, they were not philosophers.*

It is true, no traces of modern philosophy are found in the writings of the most celebrated authors; and that, if they had possessed the principles of it, they would have composed works absolutely different from those they have left us. Ought this idea to make us regret their not cultivating philosophy? For instance, we should not have that admirable discourse on universal history, by Bossuet; religion is its basis; and it was religion only which could give it that majestic force, and sublime eloquence, which forced even a philosopher to say, *This discourse has neither a model, nor an imitator; its style has produced nothing but admirers* *.—And that immortal book *Telemachus*, if it existed, would be no more than a philosophical romance! Instead of that ravishing description of the Supreme Being, drawn from Holy Writ, we should have been told in it, that God forgives every thing, always pardons, and never punishes. Instead of that perfect reason, of that pure and affecting morality, we should have found false ideas, and dangerous principles. What a pity it is that Fenelon was not a philosopher! and Corneille and Racine, why were not they philosophers?

* *fect, they fell into long explanations; but how many
 * unintelligible machines are there, for want of letters to
 * designate the parts! &c.*—*Nouveau Dictionnaire Hist.*
article Encyclopédie.

* M. de Voltaire.

We

We should have neither Polieucte, nor Athalie †. The same may be said of all the works of the present age : it is incontestable, that other sentiments, ideas, and opinions, would have produced works absolutely different ; we should, therefore, have been deprived of all these *chief d'œuvres*, which will for ever do honour to our literature and our country. There is scarce any reflection which can inspire more disgust for philosophy (11). Finally, are those who pretend, that the great men of the last century had no knowledge of our philosophical opinions, assured it is a fact ? Let us remark, that the literati of that time were infinitely more learned than those of our own. The study of the learned languages then appeared indispensable ; the Greek and Latin authors were learnt by heart ; all the systems of the ancient philosophers were known, which was already knowing most of the ideas and opinions of modern philosophers. With respect to irreligion, were not the principles of Hobbes, born in the sixteenth century, fully understood *. Our unbelievers have done nothing but repeat what that famous atheist wrote against Providence, against the Divinity, and on happiness, virtue, &c. They even renewed these opinions : *That all our sentiments and ideas come from the senses ;—that truth and falsehood are but expressions, of which we cannot verify the reality ;—that there is no legal property, neither any thing just or unjust in itself, &c.*—Hobbes spent a good deal of time in France : he was a man of great abilities ; but his opinions produced nothing but indignation in this country : all the learned, all the men of letters, read his works, which were even translated : his principles were found detestable, and his reasonings absurd : curiosity gained him

† The author must have had a real piety, to compose Polieucte, and a very great knowledge of the scriptures to write Athalie. If, by chance, these subjects had tempted a philosopher, it is not to be doubted but he would have treated them in a manner quite different ; consequently, these *chief d'œuvres* would not have existed.

* In 1588.

readers ;

readers ; but, *in those times of ignorance*, he had neither disciples nor partisans. Spinoza came afterwards ; he attacked religion with fury : ingenious as he was daring, he confounded and overturned all the principles of morality, and formed his frightful system of atheism, with much art, wit, and subtlety. *The age he lived in was not far enough advanced for him* :—he seduced nobody ; his *incoherence* and *wickedness* were exclaimed against, and his errors appeared equally odious and contemptible.—We have, nevertheless, seen these errors rise from a long oblivion, and propagate themselves : they have been given to us as new and profound reasonings ; as lights useful to mankind.—A little time after Spinoza, still in the same century, appeared that famous dictionary, an astonishing work, not by a numerous society, but the production of *one* man only. Fenelon, Bossuet, Racine, Boileau, &c. existed when Bayle published this dictionary * ; and all these great men did not fall into the philosophical scepticisms become so common in our days. The scepticism of Bayle was no more contagious, with respect to them, than that of Montaigne (12) had been, whose essays were in every body's hands upwards of an hundred years before Bayle gave his work to the public †. Modern philosophers have had recourse to this dictionary, as well as to all the other sources of the same kind ; and it is strictly true, that no bold opinion, not a single passage against religion, is to be met with in their works, which is not equally to be found in those of Montaigne, Hobbes, Spinoza, Bayle, Collins, Tyndal, or Shaftesbury ; authors successfully refuted in preceding ages. But this is not all ; these philosophers, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, afterwards copied by others, did of themselves nothing more than renew ancient follies and errors,

* Fenelon and Boileau lived almost twenty years after the publication of this work ; the best passages of which were moreover, known a long time before it was printed.

† Montaigne died in 1592.

already maintained by famous heresiarchs, who, in attacking the dogmas of faith, took it into their heads to moralize, and to form systems. The fathers of the church combated these errors, and shewed their absurdity; Bossuet himself refuted many of them. It is known, that this illustrious defender of the faith had not only the most profound knowledge of the holy scriptures, but of the whole history of the church; he knew all the details relative to the heresies, which have risen up since the establishment of Christianity. Pascal, d'Arnaud, Nicole, &c. all men of profound erudition, possessed the same knowledge; therefore these great geniuses were not ignorant of any of the systems, any of the sophisms, of modern philosophy, because the history alone of heresies contains them all; which I prove incontestably in note (13), at the end of the work. It depended, then, but upon the learned and great men themselves, of the last century, to become philosophers; but they had too much information, and ideas too just, to suffer themselves to be seduced by false quotations, and not to despise incoherent reasonings, absurd opinions, and pernicious principles: they preserved a pure and lively faith, and knew all the vain arguments with which it is combated.

Let us, at present, consider the effect which these *philosophical lights* have produced upon the literati, and people in general, of the present age. I will speak but generally; I admit many exceptions; and it will be with an extreme pleasure that I quote many of them.

The constant habitude of maintaining bad opinions, renders the mind false and subtil, and necessarily spoils the taste. When a man never seeks truth, he ends by despising it; or esteems the beauties of convention only, he is no longer sensible of ingenuous and affecting graces; he withdraws from nature, and forgets it; and, having no longer either a certain rule, or a sentiment which can supply the want of knowledge, to enable him to judge well, he blindly decides, and frequently at hazard; or he is struck with that only

which appears brilliant, and admires nothing but deceitful appearances and motley productions: for which reasons, most of the philosophical writings of this century are full of *finesse*, and entirely divested of reason. There is no genius in the plans, nor truth in the descriptions and characters. The emphatical and careless style, the imperious and haughty tone, of the chiefs of modern philosophy, had, for some time, admirers, who mistook bombast for elevation, and insolence for enthusiasm. When Fenelon, Bourdaloue, Bossuet, and Massillon, gave sublime lessons to kings and people, their manner was respectful and modest, and their modesty was sincere: they were not the inventors of the morality they taught; they only developed its principles: but when the author *des Pensées Philosophiques*, and his adherents, *instruct the universe*, they declare their opinions to be the only reasonable ones; that they have, at length, discovered *truths* unknown before to all others; and propose to us to despise every thing, which, till then, had appeared the most worthy of our esteem and veneration; each of them exclaims, This is *my system*, these are *my ideas*, and these *my decisions*! and whoever refuses to adopt and believe them, shews as much *stupidity* as *prejudice* and *ignorance*.—Such is the foundation of all their *moral and philosophical* instructions. It is not surprising, that these *beaux esprits*, who have so much confidence in their own understanding, and who look upon their own judgment as that of supreme wisdom, should speak like masters and legislators, and treat the refractory with rigour. This inconceivable delirium has seized all their disciples; the most obscure, as well as the most celebrated, have joined to the pretension of *propagating lights*, that of writing with *warmth* and *energy*: hence their declamations against prejudices; their pompous eulogiums on philosophy; their misplaced exclamations; and their violent apostrophes to sovereigns, people, and nations: hence the forced enthusiasm, dogmatical tone, and insipid monotony, found in all the writings of this kind. It is necessary to think *profoundly*, express our-

selves

selves with force, and have a lively perception. It is necessary to shew a violence of passion, an ardent desire of fame, as well as for taste and the arts. With respect to style, it is required to be satirical and brilliant. For the rest, harmony, truth, natural reason, and the rare merit of knowing how to combine and trace a good plan, are counted as nothing. Men formerly consulted their talents in writing, chose a particular kind, and followed the impulse of their genius and character; at present, some people think themselves obliged to shew all these qualities in any kind of work whatever: In a poem, epistle, or tragedy; in an eulogium, voyage, or billet, it is necessary to be a philosopher, and enlighten mankind. The consequence is, that all kinds of writing are confounded, and all works are alike; that all conventions are neglected, and few authors placed where they ought to be, or know how to make an advantageous use of the real talents they have received from nature. Nevertheless, these philosophers repeat to us, *that their works are in the hands of every body, and give delight and instruction to all the people of Europe.*

In the hands of every body!—This is saying a great deal: there are still many people who would scruple to read the most celebrated of those works, and others very sorry they should fall into the hands of their children; and many who have read them have done it solely to refute them.—*The delight of all the people of Europe!*—*Delight is energetic*, but perhaps exaggerated. What Zapata—*The a, b, c*—*Les Colimaçons du frere l'Escarbautier*—*Les Homélies du Pasteur Bourn*—*Jeannet et Nicodème*—*Le Code de la Nature*—*Le Prophete Philosophe*—*Les Mœurs*—*L'Esprit*—*Les Pensées philosophiques*—*Le militaire Philosophe*—*Le Dictionnaire philosophique*—*Les Lettres Juives*—*Le Système social*—and many others, which would soil this work; are all these philosophical writings *the delight of all the people of Europe?* Even were it true that many people read these works, that would by no means prove they were really good ones; every bold and licentious writing will be read; to excite curiosity is not to gain esteem.

When such pure and substantial works as Telemachus, the odes of the great Rousseau, Clarissa, Paradise Lost, Jerusalem Delivered, and the English Spectator, &c. are in every body's hands, we may believe them to have superior merit; they present a severe morality, and contain no irreligious principle; they are nevertheless read by every body, the incredulous even know them by heart; 'tis true, they say, *they could have wished they had contained more philosophy*; but they are forced to admire them.—Finally, we are assured that *the philosophical works convey instruction to every body*. This instruction may be judged of by the faithful abridgment I have given of it.—I see clearly the evil the philosophers have done, but of the good I am absolutely ignorant. I see that in attacking religion, they have destroyed morals, and that the licentiousness and audacity of their writings have made their numerous imitators lose that delicacy and elevated manner, as well as the simplicity, which proceed from reason wisdom, modesty, and decency*. I see they have shaken

* A man of sense, who shews an excessive pride, certainly wants discernment. The great authors of the last century spoke of themselves and their works with nobleness and simplicity, because, in general, they spoke with modesty; but at present the public are, for the most part, entertained in long prefaces with the same and success of authors. I never conceived that an author could have the courage to say, *My work has been translated; it has passed through several editions; kings and learned men have been delighted with it: I have received letters full of eulogiums on this subject, &c.* Under what pretence dare men say such things to the public? Certainly it is not for its instruction, still less for its amusement; it is then for the sole purpose of boasting of themselves. A little discernment would be sufficient to preserve them from this ridicule. Who is the author, good or bad, who does not receive compliments, and letters full of eulogiums, from persons to whom he sends his works? What would be thought, in a private society, of a man who required the attention of the assembly, whilst he related to them every agreeable thing which had been said to him during his life, without forgetting flatteries even the most excessive; who would add

shaken the respect due to sovereign authority, and substituted the most stupid egotism to the grand sentiments of patriotism, which particularly distinguished our nation. Suicide, the fruit of irreligion, has been more common among us for the last twenty years than it ever was among any other people. I see an infinity of men of sense, and many whole societies, adopt and believe follies which would have been laughed at in times we call barbarous. *The conjurer's wand, the mysteries of the Cabal*, employ the thoughts of very great personages. We hear of resurrections from the dead familiarly spoken of; more persons than one have often supped with Socrates and Marcus Aurelius. We are surrounded by prodigies: some people, being in numerous circles, see valets and servants sleep as they walk, and predict futurity; others walk in magic gardens, whose enchanted trees cause *convulsions* and salutary *crises* in those who touch them; we meet men, who, by the power of an admirable *harmony*, read in the bottom of hearts, penetrate their most secret recesses, and who are themselves inevitably obliged to answer *to the thought*, and obey the *silent commands* of objects to which they unite themselves. Finally, we have seen the contrary of what has ever until the present time been practised; village rusticity ridiculing with impunity the credulity of the inhabitants of cities, and physicians deceived by the quackery of their pati-

to this enumeration the lecture of all the complimentary letters he had received for thirty years past, and finish by distributing copies of them? This would perhaps be thought rather impertinent.—Is less respect due to the public?

The attestations of *merit and talents*, and *certificates in good form*, are useless to all but empirics and quacks. A man of nice discernment rejects all these little means; with an elevation of soul he ought to despise them; yet authors estimable for their works and character have been known to employ them; but this mode will go out of fashion; men will at length find that a modest manner is the only one capable of pleasing, and which is a proof of discernment.

ents. Such are the consequences of *these boasted philosophical lights*. M. de Voltaire wished to be *universal*. All his disciples had also the pretension of being at once *legislators, politicians, literati, learned, lovers of the fine arts and of philosophy*. This mania has infected every body; people will speak of things which they understand the least, and, by the aid of some scientific words retained by chance, and always misplaced, they think to demonstrate the effects of the magic wand and of magnetism, by excellent *physical* and *chemical* reasonings. When the ignorant are become vain and presumptuous, when they believe themselves profound philosophers, they cannot be enlightened by the truly learned. Every decision contrary to their prejudices revolts them, and self-love renders their obstinacy insurmountable. Thus modern philosophy, in shaking every principle, and overturning every idea, has corrupted morals and weakened mens minds; false ideas of every kind are the necessary consequences of bad principles; the depravity of the soul always brings on that of the mind and judgment. Each has made himself a morality to his liking, a logic after his own manner; the desire of celebrity has succeeded to a love of real fame; the most extravagant opinions have been defended, maintained, and adopted; sophisms and paradoxes received as excellent arguments, and the only things, *reason and truth*, capable of insuring lasting success, have been treated with scorn and contempt.

The present age has, nevertheless, produced many works of genius, but the authors of them have not written with superiority, but in proportion as they have studied the good authors of the age preceding*; those who depart from the rules and principles which Fenelon, Bossuet, and Pascal have followed (24), will

* M. Buffon has often told me, that *Telemachus* was the author of the last age he loved most; he thought nobody ever wrote with more purity and elevation of sentiment than Fenelon, more naturally, or who had shewed more *taste*. It seems to me, that this judgment of the first writer of the age would be properly placed in an essay *sur le gout*.

never.

never write like *Buffon*, *Montesquieu*, and *Rousseau*. If *Rousseau* be the least pure and correct of these great writers, if so much inequality be found in his works, it is because he imitates, at the same time, both the emphatical and trivial style of the author *des Pensées Philosophiques*. M. de *Voltaire* wrote not such beautiful tragedies by following the principles of modern poetry, but of the poetry created by the great *Corneille*, *Crébillon*, *Gresset*, *J. B. Rousseau*, *Racine* the younger, who has given us the excellent poem *de la Religion**; the author of *Dido*, and of the best sacred poems we have, after those of *Rousseau*; and the author of *la Métromanie*: all these great men not only were not philosophers, but had a real contempt for modern pretended philosophy.

Your Highness knows there still exist many other distinguished writers, who joined to literary talents the merit of having defended, with equal courage and success, the sacred rights of religion and virtue.—After this faithful exposition of the influence which pretended philosophers have had on morals, on the minds of men, and on the age in general; after the quotations from their works, which have made your Highness acquainted with their doctrines, principles, and character, their reasonings and purposes; judge if they have propagated useful lights, and if they are, in fact, the *benefactors of mankind*.

* It is extraordinary, that the son of the great *Racine*, author of so fine a poem, and of another in favour of religion, should die, in 1763 without being of the *Académie Française*; so much the more, as this writer was equally distinguished by his talents, virtues, and piety; his conduct, morals, and rare modesty. He had his picture drawn, holding the works of his father; his eyes and finger fixed upon this verse of *Phédre*:

Et moi fils inconnu d'un si glorieux pere! . . .

Racine, besides his poem on religion, wrote one *on grace*; some odes, and very estimable epistles; reflections upon poetry, &c. which merit reading; curious and interesting memoirs of the life of *Jean Racine*, his father; and some other works.

Racine the younger was of the *Académie of Inscriptions*.

C H A P. XXIII.

OF THE RESPECT WHICH PRINCES OWE TO RELIGION ; AND OF THE SHORTNESS OF LIFE.

THE example of a regular and virtuous conduct is due from every one to the circle, more or less extensive, in which he moves. Religion commands us to conceal our good actions ; but, at the same time, it prescribes to us to edify those to whom we are known, and those who are about us. Unbelievers have pretended, that there is a contradiction in these two commandments : but little reflection is, however, necessary to comprehend their wisdom. Among the many definitions which I have given to your Highness, there is one which particularly struck you ; that which explains the difference between a *good action* and a *benevolent action* *. A good action is but the accomplishment of a duty ; a fine action, is that which exposes to great danger, or demands a great sacrifice, and which a person might not have done, without making himself contemptible. To give what is superfluous to the poor, is a duty ; to shew sentiments of religion and humanity ; to succour, when it is in our power, the unfortunate who implore our assistance, are also indispensable duties : we owe all these examples to society. Let us not strive to withhold from it, not only that which is expected from us, but that which it has a right to require : let us merit its esteem ; this is one of the obligations of a good citizen ; but let us not aspire to its admiration. We may let our good actions be known, without being proud of them. The eulogium, *He has done but his duty*, will never inspire vanity : a Christian desires no other. He carefully conceals his *benevolent actions* : the praises he might receive on ac-

* In les Veillées du Château.

count of them might corrupt him ; therefore religion forbids him from publishing them, and says to him, Avoid the applauses of men, and God will not fail to recompense you : but if you seek vain commendations, *you will have received your reward*, in the eyes of God ; your action is not only destroyed, but corrupted and made vicious.

The extent of our duty increases in proportion to our means, and according to our situation. A rich man ought to give more than him whose fortune is moderate. As much circumspection, prudence, and exactitude of conduct, is not required of a man in a state of celibacy, who lives in retirement, as of a father of a family, at the head of a great house full of children and servants ; that which would be but a trifling fault in a person under his authority, would in him appear a grave and inexcusable error. Every person who is extensively connected with others, and who may have some influence over the minds of a certain number of persons, whether it be by his birth, fortune, or employments, is indispensably obliged to shew more regularity and virtue, and to set a better example, than an obscure individual, whose conduct and proceedings men deign not to examine. Judge, then, how extensive the obligations of a prince are in this respect ; seeing that he unites to the elevation of so high a rank, dignities, riches, every thing which dazzles mankind ; every thing which attracts and fixes their attention ; all that great influence is capable of impressing on their minds.

‘ What a misfortune ! ’ exclaims Massillon, in speaking of the bad examples given by the great, ‘ what a misfortune, that the luminaries which should guide our paths are changed into wandering lights which lead us astray ! ’

How highly criminal it is to give bad examples, which authorize vice and licentiousness, when we have it in our power to offer those which are useful ! Of how great weight are the examples of a young, well-informed, sensible, and enlightened prince, not only in

the interior of his palace, but in society, to the sickle and brilliant youth which assemble about him? His relations with the people are still more intimate and extensive. Princes are those who, by their example, impair or strengthen the virtue of the people; and it is the people only who establish the reputation of princes. Your Highness may be assured, that it will be neither your partisans, nor your friends, the learned, nor men of letters, who will insure your reputation; their approbation will be frivolous and vain, if the people refuse to confirm it, and if to their applauses there be not joined this eulogium, *He is good, charitable, and virtuous*. Without this cry of the people, is there any solid glory, any real and desirable grandeur for a prince, especially for a descendant of Henry IV? Your Highness perceives what value you ought to attach to the esteem of the people; this esteem is so much the more flattering, as it cannot be usurped, nor unworthily obtained. The people will not believe you virtuous, if they suspect you to be wanting in religion. They have frequently pardoned transient weaknesses, when they have believed them joined to a fund of piety; but they have never excused irreligion. They require, that princes of the blood of their sovereigns, born to set them great examples, should fulfil, with exactitude, all the duties of Christianity. Moreover, your Highness will, I hope, during your whole life, be profoundly penetrated with this important truth; *That religion is the sole basis of happiness and virtue*. Thus, you will always be persuaded, that the worst example which can be given, is that of irreligion. The people will see you in our temples; and it is there particularly they will implore a benediction upon you: you will know how to honour the ministers of the church, and to respect in them the sacred character with which they are invested: your conduct will impose silence on impiety; its audacity will never manifest itself to your eyes: your presence alone will repress licentiousness, and restrain vice. It is then you will be truly great, not with that artificial grandeur which belongs only to the

the place to which chance elevates, but with that real and solid greatness which the force of character and invariable principles procure. Massillon says *to the great*, 'As long as you have only that glory to which the world aspires, the world will dispute it with you; add thereto the glory of virtue, the world fears and avoids, yet at the same time respects it.'

A sincere piety only can give your Highness this virtue; always preserve this precious sentiment. In the midst of the tumult and illusions of the world, let reason constantly recal to your mind the frailty of life, and its uncertain duration: *Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh* *.—Let us profit by this salutary advice; let us always be ready to appear before that Sovereign Judge of the Universe, who knows, better than we ourselves, the bottom of our hearts, and whose immutable equity nothing can corrupt.

'To engage men to prepare for death, it should be sufficient to tell them, that, being to enter into a state of eternity, no time which is given us to prepare for it ought to appear long. There is no finite time which bears any proportion to eternity, which is infinite: a month, a day, a minute, bear some proportion to millions of years, because these contain but a certain number of months, days, hours, and minutes; but millions of years bear none to eternity, because, however multiplied, they will never become the measure of it. If, therefore, God had obliged us to think of death for millions of years, and to accompany this thought with every imaginable austerity, it would have been still much less than requiring people, who are to enter into some important employ, to prepare themselves, and reflect upon it, for a single hour beforehand. . . .

'God has not only ordained, that the time given to prepare themselves for death should be short, but that it should also be uncertain; and that, being

* Saint Matthew.

every moment subject to the surprise of death, they should always have reason to be afraid of its taking them unprepared. His design in this, was to keep it present to our minds, and to excite us to a continual vigilance *.

Never lose sight, MONSEIGNEUR, of these great truths; reflect, that in the midst even of joy and pleasure, death may surprise us, or, by a more sensible stroke, for ever deprive us of our dearest hopes!—Happiness is but an illusion; life but a rapid and transient dream: religion only can give, to a reasonable man, sure principles, efficacious consolations, an immovable firmness, peace of mind, and certain lights upon his duties and destination.

* Nicole, *des quatre fins de l'Homme*.

C H A P. XXIV.

RECAPITULATION, OF THE DUTIES OF A PRINCE..

THE first duty of every man, and particularly that of a prince, is to honour the Supreme Being, to be faithful to his law, and render him the homages he has a right to expect from creatures which he has formed. The poor, the labourer overcome with toil, the oppressed innocent, the cenobite shut up in a cloister; all these men, deprived of the pleasures and comforts of life, bless their Creator; religion prescribes them the most difficult virtues to practise, perseverance in painful labour, patience and resignation under misfortunes. But in the rank wherein your Highness is placed, it imposes on you none but obligations easy and agreeable to fulfil, to an elevated and beneficent mind. There is not one of these precepts which is not a sentiment dear to your heart; yet the goodness of God deigns to reward us for our obedience to his commands, even when our inclinations dispose us thereto. Is not your Highness happy that God attaches a merit and reward to *filial love*? What must be the force of this sacred sentiment, when united to the most just and lively gratitude! Religion, moreover, requires your Highness to be humane, charitable, and beneficent; the great examples given you by those whom you hold most dear, will, better than all my lessons, instruct you in your duty; and in the obligations prescribed to all princes to protect arts, sciences, and letters, and especially to succour the wretched.—Remember this sublime passage in a sermon of one of our greatest orators; it is to your Highness he addresses himself, when he says, in speaking of the poor:

- ‘ You are for them in the place of God upon earth;
- ‘ you are, to use the expression, *their visible providence*. . .
- ‘ What is there in your situation more worthy of envy
- ‘ than

“than the power of making people happy? If humanity towards the people be the first duty of the great, is it not also the most delicious use they can make of their greatness*?”

Your Highness knows how agreeable and satisfactory a thing it is to fulfil this holy duty.—I shall never forget that the permission to go in search of the unfortunate to succour and take care of them, was the sole recompence my pupils ever asked of me! May they never lose the remembrance of these pure enjoyments! Is it possible that those who have once felt all the charms of virtue, should ever become vicious, unmerciful, and insensible—when they recollect the time of their lives wherein they used no mystery, nor concealed their proceedings but to perform actions of humanity, wherein virtuous sentiments only could inspire lively and delicious emotions; and wherein they formed none but beneficent designs; finally, a time wherein the desires, sensations, and every movement of the soul, agreed so perfectly with the duties, principles, and natural light of reason? Admirable harmony, produced by innocence united to virtue, and which would establish happiness if it could always continue! Religion commands us to fulfil with exactitude all the duties of the station in which Providence has placed us; therefore it is religion, which,

* *Petit Catechisme de Maffillon, quatrième Dimanche, sur l'humanité des grands envers le peuple.* What work of philosophy has ever exhorted to beneficence in so affecting and sublime a manner? Who are the philosophers who have maintained the rights of the people and of humanity with more eloquence, force and courage, than Bourdaloue and Maffillon? Read the *Petit Catechisme* of Maffillon, and the sermons of Bourdaloue; among others, his fine sermon *on Ambition*, tom. 1. du *Catechisme*, and compare these two admirable discourses with the philosophical declamations; yet these Christian orators, as well as Fénélon, preceded our philosophers; and they expressed themselves with a noble liberty, not in anonymous writings, but in the midst of a court which commanded respect, in the presence of their sovereign.

in fortifying the virtuous inclinations of your Highness's mind, will undoubtedly add to your goodness and condescension to those who shall be dependant upon you; it is religion only which will have the power of giving to your resolutions a firmness not to be shaken, and of making you fulfil, to their greatest extent, the sacred obligations of a faithful subject, a zealous citizen, and a tender and generous friend. Every citizen ought to love his king and his country; but it seems just and natural that this affection should be still more lively in the heart of a prince of the blood, who ought to comprehend that these noble sentiments, founded upon relations and ties equally sacred and honourable for him, ennoble his dependance, augment his personal consideration and the éclat of his dignity. Your Highness will also be acquainted with all the duties of friendship; you have read in Holy Writ, that we must *not say to our friend, Come again to-morrow*, when we have it in our power to oblige him to-day. You will know how to chuse virtuous friends, and to appreciate the happiness of being in a situation to serve them; you will not content yourself with seizing opportunities of doing it, but will go in quest of them, and feel how much more agreeable it is to *anticipate* than to *grant*. Finally, you will preserve, in the midst of dissipation and the great world, religious principles, a just mind, a sensible, compassionate, and upright heart, a taste for reading and the arts, a respect for decency, a contempt for vice, and love for virtue.—Such are the pleasing hopes I have conceived: if your Highness do not justify them, you will be severely judged; you will not have for excuse, either the misfortune of a neglected education, or the want of light and instruction. But your Highness will fulfil every wish that my tenderness can form for your happiness and honour; I dare add, that this recompence is due to the perfect cares I have consecrated to you: this is my only desire, and which alone can satisfy me. In the bosom of
retreat,

retreat, where I hope to end my days, I shall not enjoy the pleasure of being a witness of your success; but fame will inform me of it; and then, with the sweet sentiment of the Apostle, when speaking of his virtuous disciples, I shall also be able to say, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth* *.

* 3d Epistle of St. John.



NOTES.

N O T E S.

In Vol. I. page 5, line 34, after the word *supportable*, the Reader is desired to mark (1.) as a reference to the following Note.

(1.) **M**OTION not being essential to matter, and matter not being able to give motion to itself, it follows, that there is some other substance than matter, and that this substance is not a body. . . . Motion not being of the essence of matter, it must necessarily have received it elsewhere: it cannot have received it from nothing, for nothing cannot act: there is then another cause which has impressed motion on matter, and which cannot be either matter or body; it is what we call spirit. . . . If the world was formed by the sole motion of matter, why should it have been so worn out in the beginning, that it can no more, nor has been able for many ages to form new stars?—Why does it not daily produce animals and men by other means than those of generation, if it produced them formerly? We must believe, then, that an intelligent and almighty Cause formed, in the beginning, this universe in the state of perfection in which we at present see it.—It appears also, that there was a design in the Cause which produced the universe. It is the greatest of absurdities to believe and say that the eye was not made to see, or the ear to hear. In this wretched system we must alter the most reasonable and best
‘ established

* established language, not to admit knowledge and intelligence in the first Author of the world and his creatures. It is not less absurd to believe, that if the first men sprung from the earth, they should have received every where the same form of body, and the same features, without any one of them having a part more than the other, or in another situation; but it is speaking conformable to reason and experience to say, that mankind proceeded all from the same mould, and were made of the same blood*.

* It is said, *the soul hath a sleep like that to which the body is subject*. They may admit, if they please, that for a time its operations cease, respecting its affinity with the organs of the body; but when they add, *that it may, as well as the body, find an eternal death, because, like it, it is subject to a momentary one*, nothing can be so inconsequent and false.—First, Sleep is not a momentary death either in body or soul; they both exist. That their faculties, their organs may be differently affected, is agreed: to infer death from hence, is to say, that a body in motion, when that motion yields to repose, becomes annihilated. Besides, sleep is but *the image* of death: and from an image to deduce reality, or from a typical death, a death eternal, is to act against all the rules of reasoning It is not true, either, that the body finds an eternal death in the sense in which it is attributed to the soul; although the bonds of animal life be broken, the body subsists in its elementary parts, and though the whole be devoured by the dust, not a particle is annihilated. *The eternal death* of the soul would be a total *destruction*. It would then be a most enormous ambiguity, that under the term *death*, equally adapted to the soul and the body, we should understand two things so different: here a simple alteration of the parts, and there annihilation. Without intermission, certain im-

* En cyclopédie, mot *Alléisme*.

' pious people infer from the death of the body, the
 ' total extinction of the soul. It is not only reasoning
 ' against all the principles of religion and morality, but
 ' against those of philosophy : it teaches us that no-
 ' thing is destroyed by death.—Let an artificial ma-
 ' chine be broken, a clock ; though no more wheels,
 ' pivots, or balances are to be found, the copper and
 ' gold remain the same : it is equally so with bodies ;
 ' death changes only the motion and configuration ;
 ' they are not *indestructible*, but they are in some mea-
 ' sure *immortal*, that is to say, durable ; of themselves
 ' they cannot return to nothing.—No one thing varies
 ' in nature but the composition and motion of bodies ;
 ' every thing changes, every thing dies, and nothing
 ' perishes. From these principles, let us judge of the
 ' soul* : as it is a real and spiritual substance, the
 ' changes of configuration in an organised body can-
 ' not destroy it, since they cannot destroy one particle
 ' of matter. Then this substance, very distinct from
 ' body, subsists after the dissolution of the body : and,
 ' having no parts, it not only cannot be destroyed,
 ' but it cannot be divided (like a pulverised body) ;
 ' so that if it subsists an instant after, it subsists every
 ' successive instant, and that eternally. . . . The soul
 ' being an intelligent substance, is not subject to any
 ' of the alterations of the body ; consequently it sur-
 ' vives the destruction of the machine it animated :

* D'où nous vient du néant cette crainte bizarre ?
 Tout en sort, rien n'y rentre, et la nature avare
 Dans tous ces changemens ne perd jamais son bien.—
 Ton art ni tes fourneaux n'anéantiront rien ;
 Toi qui riche en fumée, ô sublime Alchimiste,
 Dans ton laboratoire invoque Trismégiste.—
 Tu peux filtrer, dissoudre, évaporer ce sel ;
 Mais celui qui l'a fait veut qu'il soit immortel :
 Prétendras-tu toujours à l'honneur de produire,
 Tandis que tu n'as pas le pouvoir de détruire.
 Si du sel ou du sable un grain ne peut périr,
 L'Etre qui pense en moi craindrait-il de mourir ? &c.

RACINE, Fils, Poème de la Religion, Chant. 2.

' having

‘ having received such a nature and existence, it is durable, it is eternal, &c *.’

This is but a very small part of the many metaphysical reasons which prove the immortality of the soul. I have transcribed these passages, because they have nothing abstracted, and there is no young person who may not understand them with a little attention; but there are excellent works upon this subject, which answer, in the most solid and convincing manner, all the sophisms produced by *dishonesty* and impiety.

Vol. I. p. 21. l. 36.

(2) During the first three ages of the church, the persecuted Christians were obliged to write many apologies for their justification.

‘ The profession alone,’ says M. de Fleuri, ‘ which they made of rejecting all established religions, was sufficient to render them odious to the people: it was in vain they said that they adored in mind the God, creator of the heaven and the earth; the idolatrous people did not understand this language, and they called them Atheists, because they adored none of the gods which were seen in the temples; because they had no altars lighted up, nor bloody sacrifices.— The priesthood of the idols, the augurs, the aruspices, the soothsayers, in a word, all those whose professions were founded upon paganism, did not fail to foment and excite the people’s hatred, and to employ to this effect the misfortunes which happened, such as bad seasons, mortalities, and wars; the Christians, say they, draw the anger of the gods upon all those who let them live. By these prejudices they empoisoned even their very virtues; the charity which they had for each other was an odious conspiracy; their alms passed for the means of seduction; their miracles were attributed to magic †. . . Even the persecutions were a subject of hatred

* Gauchat, tome 8.

† Id. ib.

‘ against

• against the Christians. It was supposed they were
• criminal, because they were every where treated as
• criminals; and the atrocity of their crimes was esti-
• mated by the rigour of their punishments.—These
• were the reasons which rendered them so odious to
• the people and to the ignorant *.

The most famous apologies of the Christians are—
those of Quadrat and Aristides; the two apologies of
St. Justin the martyr; that of Athenagoras, of Ter-
tullian, and the dialogue of Minutius Felix, intitled
Octavius. Quadrat, bishop of Athens, composed his
apology for the Christians towards the year of our
Lord 124, and presented it to the emperor Adrian,
who at that time was travelling through Greece. Euse-
bius has preserved some fragments of it. Nothing
remains of that of Aristides, an Athenian and Chris-
tian philosopher, who wrote a little after Quadrat. Of
the two apologies of St. Justin, the first was in the
year of our Lord 150: he wrote the other sixteen years
after. It is believed the apology of Athenagoras was
also in the year 166, and that he addressed it to Marcus
Aurelius and Lucius Verus.—The apology of Tertul-
lian was looked on as a master-piece; it is believed that
he addressed it to the emperor Severus. The Octavius
of Minutius Felix, a Roman orator, appeared in the
third century.

Tertullian was born at Carthage; he was a Pagan,
and on reading the Holy Scriptures became a Christian,
and defended the faith with much courage. He em-
braced afterwards the errors of Montan, and became
a Montanist; he died in an extreme old age towards
the year 216. The works which he composed in the
Catholic church are:—the books of *prayer*, of *baptism*,
and of *sermons*; the *apology*, the treatises of *patience*,
the *exhortation to martyrdom*, the book to *Scapula*, and

* Mœurs des premiers Chrétiens.—See in this work the
horrid persecutions which the Christians have suffered, as
well as the astonishing detail of all the obstacles, insur-
mountable in appearance, which opposed the establish-
ment of Christianity.

that

that of the *testimony of the soul*; the treatises of *public shows* and *idolatry*; and, according to the most general opinion, the excellent book of *prescriptions*.—He wrote several other books since his heresy.

Montan, a famous heretic in the second century, pretended to be inspired, and a prophet; he was of Mysia. Two women of Phrygia, named Priscilla and Maximilla, joined him, and pretended also to be prophetesses. Montan refused the communion to all those who had fallen into any errors, supporting, that the priests and bishops had not a right to absolve them. He condemned second marriages as adulteries, and taught other errors: he had a great number of disciples. Appollinarius of Cesarea was their principal adversary.—Encyclopédie.

Vol. I. p. 67. l. 6. of the Note.

(3.) Father Mallebranche, born at Paris the 6th of August 1638, of a genteel family, was the youngest of ten children; he entered into *la Congrégation de l'Oratoire*, in the same city, in 1660. One day, as he was walking along la rue St. Jacques, a bookseller presented him with *le Traité de l'Homme* of Descartes, which had just appeared—Mallebranche was then twenty-six years of age: he began to turn over the leaves of this book, which made the greatest impression upon him; he read it with such transport, and his heart beat so violently, that he was frequently obliged to interrupt his lecture. He abandoned every other study, to give himself up entirely to the philosophy of Descartes; and at the expiration of ten years *Cartesianism*, he composed the famous book of *La Recherche de la Vérité*.—Voyez Eloges de Fontenelle.

Vol. I. p. 144. l. 16.

(4.) J. J. Rousseau said, 'The duty of following and loving the religion of one's country, did not extend to the dogmas contrary to good morality, such as intolerance: it is this horrid dogma which arms men against each other, and renders them enemies of human

* human kind. The difference between civil and theological tolerance is puerile and vain; they are inseparable, they cannot be admitted without each other. Even angels would not live in peace with men, whom they regarded as the enemies of God. . . . May God forbid that I should ever preach to man this cruel dogma of intolerance; that I should ever incline him to detest his neighbour, or say to others, *You will be damned!*

There are in this paragraph as many errors as words.

If we love the religion of our country, if we think it a duty to follow it, we believe it true, respectable, and useful; it is then impossible to reject one of the articles of belief which it prescribes. If, like Rousseau, we esteem the Gospel to be a *divine book*, a book which cannot have been the work of man, we must necessarily believe all which it contains; then, believing the truths which it instructs, we believe firmly also, that all sects which depart from it are in error, and as this error, in the system of faith, exposes the eternal salvation of those who give themselves up to it, we ought to neglect nothing to bring them back to the way of truth.—Thus *Christian intolerance* is not horrid, it is not cruel; it is, on the contrary, humane and benevolent; it does not arm men against each other, and render them the enemies of human kind*. These excesses (hatred and persecutions) the fruits of weak fanaticism, of a profound ignorance of the principles of the Gospel, we have already said, are expressly forbidden by religion.—*Christian intolerance*, in condemning errors, loves and pities the strayed sheep; it thinks only of bringing it back to truth and happiness.—If it says to the Atheist, *Thou shalt be damned!* it would add—if thou diest in this condition; which renders the expression very different; it gives a charitable and salutary advice.—Without doubt, it says to the unbeliever, ‘You are in the way of death, as we may say to an unjust man, or

* What a phrase!—It is as if we were to say, that *all men* are enemies to *all men*.

‘ an adulterer ; but do we know the designs of God
 ‘ and his eternal judgments ? Do we know if the one
 ‘ will open his eyes to truth, or the other to virtue ?
 ‘ Impenetrable mystery ! We cannot, without teme-
 ‘ rity, judge before the Lord ; and reprobation will
 ‘ not be consummated till after death, although (fol-
 ‘ lowing the ordinary course of things) we die in the
 ‘ error or crime in which we lived.—Besides, intole-
 ‘ rance consists only in the opinion of the mind, which
 ‘ tells us, that truth being one, and necessary to salva-
 ‘ tion, those who live remote from truth are out of the
 ‘ way of salvation ; it changes not either the duties of
 ‘ the citizen, the sentiments, or the works of charity.
 ‘ No affinity betwixt the belief, the morals of the un-
 ‘ fortunate, and the consolation which charity pre-
 ‘ scribes. A truly devout person will never permit
 ‘ those to perish in misery whom he can assist, whatever
 ‘ they may be, Pagans, unbelievers, or Christians*.
 With respect to the distinction between civil and theo-
 logical tolerance, it is real and striking.

‘ Civil intolerance is that of a government which
 ‘ proscribes such worship ; on this object all the pastors
 ‘ together have no authority. Theological intolerance
 ‘ is a judgment which the church declares, that such a
 ‘ sect, not being in the way of truth, is not in her
 ‘ bosom. The church alone can pronounce on truth
 ‘ or error, and drive sectaries from her bosom ; go-
 ‘ vernment alone can banish them from the country.
 ‘ These two intolerances are not only separable, but
 ‘ really separated : as in Poland, in Germany, &c.†.
 Such is true *Christian intolerance* ; it unites, as we see,
 with sweetness, active and tender charity ; it is founded
 on humanity as well as reason. That which the preju-
 dices and errors of philosophers describe, is but a chi-
 mera, a monstrous excess, which equally injures nature
 and religion. There have been philosophers who
 thought, that those who published atheism, or wrote
 against religion, ought to be punished. From the

* Gauchat, vol. 19.

† Id. ib.

papers of Mr. Formey, secretary to the Royal Academy of Prussia, an article has been taken, with which they enriched the *Encyclopédie*; it were to be wished that all the articles of this dictionary offered, in general, such reasonable principles.

' Atheism, publicly professed, is punishable according to natural right. . . . The most tolerant of men will not disallow, that the magistrate has a right to repress those who dare profess Atheism, and even to make them perish, if he cannot otherwise drive them from society *. No one questions that the magistrate has full authority to punish the wicked and vicious, and to reward the good and virtuous. If he punish those who do an injury to a single person, he has undoubtedly as much right to punish those who injure a whole society, by denying that there is a God, or that he interferes with the conduct of mankind, by recompensing those who advance the public good, and punishing those who attack it.—Such a man may be looked upon as the enemy of his species, as he destroys all the foundations on which their preservation and happiness are principally established. By the law of nature, such a man might be punished by every individual; consequently, the magistrate ought to possess that right, not only over those who deny the existence of the Divinity, but over those also who render that existence useless, by denying his providence, or preaching against his worship; over those who are guilty of express blasphemy, profanation, perjury, or wanton swearing. Religion is so necessary for the support of human society, acknowledged such, as well by the Pagans as the Christians, that it is impos-

* The true spirit of the Gospel will always prevent their being put to death. This philosopher speaks like a politician, not a Christian. Besides, I believe even the best policy would be, to punish those who attack religion, by exclusion from those places and honours to which they aspire. Punish them not, but refuse them pensions and marks of esteem; let nothing be taken from or given to them, and the duties of religion, justice, and policy, will soon be perfectly reconciled.

' fible society can subsist, if we admit not an invifible
 ' power which governs the affairs of mankind. See the
 ' proof of it in the article *Des Athées*.—The fear and
 ' respect which we entertain for that Being, produces
 ' more effect upon men, to make them observe thofe du-
 ' ties, on which their felicity depends on earth, than all
 ' the punishments which magiftracy can inflict. The
 ' atheists even dare not deny it; for which reason they
 ' fuppofe religion to be a political invention, to go-
 ' vern fociety with more facility. But, fhould it be
 ' fo, politicians have a right to maintain their efta-
 ' blifhments, and to treat as enemies thofe who fhould
 ' deftroy them. There are no politicians fo foolifh
 ' as thofe who lend an ear to the infinuations of athe-
 ' ifm, and who have the imprudence openly to pro-
 ' fefs irreligion. Atheifts, by flattering their fove-
 ' reigns, and prepolleffing them againft religion, do
 ' them as much injury as to religion itfelf, fince they
 ' deprive them of all right, except force, and difengage
 ' their fubjects from all obligation and oaths of fidelity
 ' which they have taken. A right eftablifhed on the
 ' one fide by force only, and on the other by fear,
 ' will fooner or later be its own deftruction. If prin-
 ' ces could deftroy all confcience and religion in the
 ' minds of men, with the idea of acting afterwards
 ' with full liberty, they would foon fee themfelves
 ' buried under the ruins of religion. Confcience and
 ' religion engage every fubject, firft, to execute the
 ' legitimate orders of his fovereign, or of the legisla-
 ' tive authority under which he lives, when even they
 ' are oppofite to his particular interefts: fecondly,
 ' not to refift that power by force, as St. Paul orders.
 ' Religion is more the fupport of kings, than the fword
 ' which has been given them.'

Vol. II. page 22, line 10.

(5.) Bolingbroke, born in 1672, attacked religion;
 and, by an inconfiftence common to all irreligious phi-
 losophers, he has fpoken of the Gofpel as *the moft fim-
 ple, clear, and perfect fystem of natural religion, and as*
the

the most proper doctrine to extinguish avarice, injustice, and violence.—But this irreligious philosopher was of the most depraved morals.—Lord Chesterfield said, that the excesses of his table might be compared to the phrensy of the *bacchanals*.

Collins, born near London in 1676, openly attacked religion; and was superiorly refuted, particularly by Clarke and Crouzas. He was rich, and had a considerable library, and was so little attached to his opinions, that he readily lent books to those who endeavoured to refute him. At last, he appeared to repent, when dying, for having written against religion.

We are (says the authors of the new Historical Dictionary) indebted to Collins for not having made use of obscenity in his writings, the vile resource of the impious, who defend themselves with all weapons.

Tyndal, born in England in 1656, has written many impieties; and his works are as void of reason as of elegance. Tyndal drew upon himself the public scorn by his principles and conduct: by turns a Catholic and a Protestant, he changed his religion according to his interest; a zealous partizan of James upon the throne, and his most ardent detractor when he had lost the scepter.

Shaftesbury, as I said, attacked religion but by pleasantries and sarcasms.

Monsieur de Voltaire was only the copyist of these three writers. It is true, he has infinitely surpassed their audacity, licence, and impiety; but he has continually pillaged and translated them without acknowledging it: and has scarce ever quoted them but in a false manner; incessantly imputing sentiments and ideas to them which they never had.

Vol. II. page 49.

(6.) Rousseau is not the first philosopher who valued himself upon shewing his sincerity, at the expence even of his reputation and honour. The Life of Cardan, written by himself, is a confession more strange even than Rousseau's.

Cardan acknowledges that he was vindictive, envious, treacherous, debauched, a calumniator, and a forcerer, &c. On the other side, he boasts with *the same candour*: I was born, said he, to deliver the world from an infinity of errors: he adds, that his works are perfect.

Montaigne pretended also to give an example of this kind of sincerity *. And since him, a woman (a philosopher, without doubt) appeared animated with a similar sentiment: it was the celebrated Hortense Mancini, duchess of Mazarin. In her Memoirs, she attributes all her misfortunes to the black ingratitude she had for the cardinal, her uncle and benefactor.—

‘At the first news we had of his death,’ said she, ‘my brother and sister said to each other, *Thank God, he is gone!* This was all their regret; and, to say the truth, I was scarcely more afflicted.’

We ought to esteem the confession of a dishonourable fault, when it repairs the injustice: but he who dishonours himself in cold blood, wantonly; he who, without necessity, discovers his ill-conduct, is but an impudent cynic, who, deprived of every sentiment of shame and respect for mankind, proudly boasts his vices, and believes there is great force and grandeur of soul to blush at nothing.

Vol II. page 49.

(7.) Hobbes was born at Malmesbury, in 1558: he died at the age of ninety-two, and, in his last moments, shewed as much fear of death and pusillanimity, as, during his life, he had shewn impiety. He is reproached with having the most licentious manners.

Baruch de Spinoza, born at Amsterdam, in 1632, was the son of a Portuguese Jew merchant; he embraced Christianity after he had been driven from the

* In a manner, however, less revolting:—he is contented to tell us he had some defects and weaknesses; but he makes no confession which can blemish his memory.

synagogue, and wrote several impieties upon the Mosaic legislation: he attacked all the dogmas of the Gospel, and overthrew all the principles of morality. Yet he often assisted at sermons, exhorted assiduity in attendance at church, and spoke with respect of the Supreme Being, although his doctrine led to materialism.—Spinoza died at forty five of a lingering illness.

It was in a little town in the county *de Foix* where Bayle was born, in 1647: he was brought up in Calvinism, which he abjured at twenty years of age, on reading some controversial books; and to which, out of levity, he returned, at the expiration of seventeen months. His conduct with the minister Jurieu does but little honour to his character. Jurieu had been his friend and benefactor; Bayle was accused of having debauched his wife; and was convicted of having abused his confidence, by the communication of letters and papers which Jurieu had shewn him during their intimacy. This philosopher has left many works; the most celebrated of which is his dictionary, which is reproached with the most abominable licences of every kind; a multitude of bold random anecdotes, false quotations, capricious judgments, extravagant paradoxes and sophisms. ' Bayle takes up both sides of every opinion: he exposes the reasons which support, and those which destroy it; but he favours more those which give credit to an error, than those by which we may support a truth. A celebrated writer, a great admirer of Bayle, said, he was the attorney-general of philosophers; but that he does not draw his conclusions. He does sometimes. This attorney-general is often the judge, and the party to be judged; and when he concludes, it is generally for the bad side.'—*Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique, par une Société de Gens de Lettres.*

Vol. II. page 60.

(8.) Here is the judgment of the author of *l'Esprit des Philosophes irréligieux*, sur J. J. Rousseau.

M 3

' Rousseau

' Rousseau has but one passion, that of being original, and making a great noise in the world. Born with the most elevated and fertile genius, the most rich and brilliant imagination, the most penetrating, dextrous, and flexible mind, he was afraid of appearing but an ordinary man, if he exercised his talents on known and familiar objects only. Thence the singular idea of attacking, equally, philosophy and the Gospel. Having seen that the posts of honour were occupied on both sides, he wished to place himself, as we may say, upon the line of separation, to attack either, alternately : by this means he discovered the secret of saying every thing in a superior and seducing manner ; of publishing every idea, which the fecundity of an inexhaustible and ambidextrous mind could furnish for and against the truth. Perhaps religion would have reckoned him amongst her most illustrious defenders, if he had found it possible to efface the elevation, force, and magnificence of Bossuet's works. It is impossible that a soul like Rousseau's should not have been struck with the dignity and richness of the great picture of faith ; and without doubt that sublime passage so well known, " The majesty of the scriptures astonishes me, &c." may be regarded as an homage escaped from the internal conviction he had of the excellence and beauty of religion. Nothing ever escaped him, of the same kind, on the score of philosophy.

It is not in a single passage only that Rousseau has rendered this homage to religion ; I have quoted an infinity of the same kind. These eternal truths were at the bottom of his soul : we feel them in a strong and sensible manner whenever he expresses them. But why, on the other side, has he so formally denied and attacked them ? why does he so often support the *pro* and *con* ? He was led astray by excessive pride ; he misconceived true glory ; he would be unlike every other person : too proud and too great to comply with the flexibility and tricks of intrigue ; too covetous of success to give himself freely to the good cause, and

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to reject the artifices which might acquire popularity; too sensible, blindly to adopt the philosophic system, he took the middle road; he appeared to float betwixt error and truth, a situation which naturally flatters our weakness. Strokes of admirable morality made every honest man his friend; whatever were his errors, who could despise or hate him, who had so often spoke of virtue in such persuasive, bewitching, and sublime terms? Licentious pictures, dangerous principles, but veiled with art, exposed with seducing address, ought generally to please, and cannot produce, even in the minds of the most severe, that disgust, that lively indignation, which the fables of Voltaire and Diderot, &c. excite. The clergy and the devout have all pardoned him, from the bottom of their souls, for what he wrote against religion, in favour of the repeated homages which he has rendered the Gospel. The women, as I have elsewhere remarked*, have also pardoned him for having spoken of them with contempt, as he always mentioned them *with the voice of passion*. In a word, he has known how to reconcile the whole world, still preserving the liberty of saying every thing; and precisely because he had no fixed opinion or invariable principle; for he contradicts himself in such a manner, that from the atheist to the saint, every one may find ideas and principles analogous to his belief and sentiments.—But, it will be said, perhaps, he has not spared the philosophers; with what contempt has he not treated them in his works! True; but he has also written against revelation, against *eternal punishment*; and that was entering into the general system of philosophers: besides, he has flattered the sect, in a still more pointed manner, in his *Nouvelle Heloise*, by describing an atheist as the most accomplished model of wisdom and virtue. This character is so far from nature, so chimerical, that it was sufficient to spoil the best-conceived work. And, indeed, the most enthusiastic partisans of Rousseau equally condemn

* Dans *Adèle & Theodore*.

the idea (from which such pernicious consequences result) as well as the cold, insipid and unnatural personage. Rousseau most certainly did not believe, that an atheist could be the most pure, wise, honest, and happiest of men; but he was not ignorant how much the philosophers would be obliged to him for the supposition; and that this condescension would infallibly engage them all to render justice to the particular beauties which impartiality will ever find in this dangerous romance*. Rousseau possessed as much address as genius; his mind was as delicate as it was elevated; he knew the world and mankind a thousand times better than the other philosophers, who looked upon him as a savage and a misanthrope. He had the air of despising art and management: he always repeated, that he wrote not to gain partisans; that he knew his works would displease, &c.: but he had profoundly calculated the means of obtaining universal applause and a brilliant reputation; he rejected those which could debase, but he employed every other. All the world cried out on his excessive inconsistency, which, in effect, would be inconceivable, if it had been involuntary. But can we believe, that a man born with so much reason, wit, intellects, and genius, could continually support the *pour* and the *contre*, without having perceived it? In Rousseau's system of skillful management, with the rage of distinguishing himself, of shining, and pleasing all the world, could he be consistent? He was sensible, that intending to exercise his eloquence on every subject, he should necessarily be the most inconsistent of men; but for this he decided, certain of appearing, at least, the most brilliant and original†. When Rousseau pretends,

* Indeed Voltaire was the only unjust person towards Rousseau; but this injustice proceeded not from the difference of opinion; we know what was the motive of it. With Rousseau's address, and with the scepticism he professed, he could not expose himself to hatred, without exciting envy, by his genius, talents, and success.

† *Original*. Although he appropriated, without scruple,

tends, that children ought not to be brought up in any religion, but, simply, 'to put them in a condition to chuse that, to which the best use of reason ought to conduct them;' and, in the same volume, he says, 'that it is an inexcusable presumption to profess any other religion than that of the country where we are born *'—when he knows exactly the idea of right and wrong, he adds, 'Throw your eyes over all the nations of the world . . . you will every where find the same ideas of justice and honesty; every where the same notions of right and wrong.' And again, in the same volume, he says, 'All the morality of our actions depends on the judgment we ourselves conceive of them †'—when he says, 'As long as any good faith remains amongst men, we must not trouble peaceable souls; nor alarm the belief of the simple, by difficulties which they cannot resolve, and which disquiet without instructing them.' . . . 'These dogmas (the law, immortality, rewards, and future punishments) are those in which it is important to instruct youth; and to persuade every citizen: whoever attacks them, merits punishment, without doubt; he is the perturbator of order, and the enemy of society ‡'—When he attacks revelation, denies original sin, natural law, &c.; when, in short, he thus explains himself, 'How can a man be a sceptic by principle? in good faith I cannot comprehend it.—These philosophers exist not, or are the most unhappy of men, &c.; and when he assures, in the same work, that '*his scepticism is not at all painful*'—when Rousseau takes the liberty of making such striking and palpable contradictions, and we meet

ple, the ideas of others, particularly the wise Locke, whom he had the injustice to criticise with contempt; Seneca, Montaigne, Richardson, and many others, whom he never quotes.

* Emile, tome ii.

† Emile, tome iii. page 92 and 99.

‡ Emile.

with them at almost every page in his works, can it be believed that he had not himself remarked such unaccountable inconsistencies?—It is certain we cannot be perfectly uniform, but when we follow with fidelity the sacred and invariable principles which our illustrious moralists have extracted from the Gospel. But the excessive inconsequence of Rousseau, a man possessed of such art, penetration, and intelligence, could be only a fault committed with reflection, a voluntary resignation of reason. He never seeks to excuse his contradictions: we perceive, clearly, his mind is made up in this respect: he has replied to many criticisms on his works; but always passed over in silence the reproaches of his inconsistencies, neither correcting or disguising them, in any of the editions published since these criticisms were made.

An author who sacrifices every thing to the desire of astonishing, pleasing, and seducing, whatever be his talents, will never compose a useful work: thus we find those of Rousseau have produced the greatest disorders. There certainly does not exist a more dangerous romance than the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.—The heroine is represented to us as a person, who to strict principles joins a superior reason, a noble and elevated soul, and the most virtuous sentiments; yet this heroine is deficient in the duty she owes her father, her family, and the public opinion, abandoning herself to a most violent passion for an adventurer: at last she dishonours herself, and compleats her debasement, by renouncing one lover to marry another. The hero is a vile seducer, who, taking advantage of the confidence of a respectable family, violates the most sacred rights of hospitality, betrays all the duties of gratitude, and debauches an innocent young creature, whom he never could hope to marry, as the inequality of their birth and fortune placed insurmountable obstacles between them; and this same person is represented to us under the character of a young man full of rectitude, delicacy, and virtue.—To sum up all, this *wise*, this *perfect* man, who is described to us as an accomplished mortal,

is

is an *atheist*.—Such are the errors and vices which the author endeavours to decorate with all the charms of virtue! such are the characters which he wishes to render interesting and sublime*! How many young men, in the condition of St. Preux, may not this book have perverted! How many, by a single lecture of this work, may have lost that horror and contempt, which the infamy and extravagant depravation of a tutor, or a master, who endeavours to debauch a scholar of a rank superior to his own, naturally inspire! What destruction must not agreeable and brilliant works produce, which thus overthrow all received opinions, all moral ideas, which good sense alone and reason inspire!

Emile, the best of Rousseau's works, is also the most esteemed in the eyes of reason. The author appropriates many ideas which do not belong to him; he repeats the best passages of Locke, yet pronounces his name but to criticise it, in a manner as despicable as it is unjust; but in translating Locke he embellishes him. Who, better than Rousseau, could give charms to reason! Besides, we find in Emile an infinity of ideas and observations truly new. This book contains dangerous principles; condemnable errors, unaccountable incoherencies, and impracticable counsels; but it comprehends also such profound, just, and reasonable reflections, such delicate remarks, such enlightened ideas, that it will ever be necessary to those who intend to educate children.—This work, in spite of its imperfections and reprehensible passages, assures its author a just claim of public gratitude; we owe to him (and to him alone) the general opinion which prevails at present, that the most important, the sweetest, and most

* This project of rendering vice *interesting* and *sublime* is yet more marked, more revolting, in the Confessions of J. J. Rousseau. The author there accuses himself of having calumniated, stolen, of being ungrateful, of changing his religion for interest, &c.—The *heroine* is the vilest and most abject of women, yet are the epithets of *angelic creature*, *pure soul*, *celestial soul*, &c. lavished upon her.

sacred obligation which we can fulfil, is the education and care of our children. The feeling manner in which he speaks of them proves that he had studied and loved them; it is a sentiment he knew also how to inspire by anecdotes and descriptions, as true as they are ingenious and interesting.—In short, we are indebted to him for a multitude of precepts relative to education; and by delicious pictures of a country life, he has contributed to reconcile and approximate the gay world to nature*.

Emile has not been, however, so useful as might be expected, relative to education, because many people have gone astray, like its author, by adopting all his principles; and others, not comprehending him, have done the reverse of what he advised.—For example, I have seen children entirely left to themselves, learning nothing, not knowing how to read at twelve years of age, having no idea of any thing, and besides discovering a rustic rudeness, an indocility, an impertinence which really astonished me; and what did not surprise me less, was to hear they were brought up *according to the principles of Rousseau*. It is true, Rousseau has said, it was ridiculous to teach children Latin and geography; and I believe, in general, he was right: he adds also, that we must not give them masters; he proscribes every kind of lesson and regular occupation. I am very far from adopting this idea; but if Rousseau allows his pupil so much independence, he does not by that pretend that the tutor should be idle, and leave the child to himself; on the contrary, he desires he should never cease instructing by example and conversation, and, above all, that he may never be out

* There is in the mind a general disposition which prefers the *country*, or that which represents it, to the finest palaces in *town*.—We wear no diamonds, do not love *les bals pailés*, give no feasts; we prefer simplicity to magnificence; we are less distant from nature, and every one feels the want of it, or wishes to shew the desire of approaching it. We owe to Rousseau, and, above all, to M. de Buffon, this revolution, which cannot but be very favourable to manners.

of his sight. This is what in general has not been comprehended, because it was more commodious to simplify and reduce the system to this: not to pay masters, to teach the catechism, to contradict the children, or to employ them; these are the principles of J. J. Rousseau, and the best education which can be given.—From this abstract of Emile, such educations have resulted, as ought not to encourage us to follow this method, and which we should be very wrong to attribute entirely to the principles of Rousseau.

Vol. II. page 72.

(9.) Isaac Newton was born in 1642, of a noble family, in Lincolnshire. We are assured, that at twenty-four years old, he had made his great discoveries in geometry. He died at the age of eighty-five years.

Leibnitz, cotemporary with Newton, was born at Leipstick in 1646. He cultivated with equal success literature and the sciences. The great altercations he had with Newton troubled his repose, and advanced, it is said, the term of his existence. Of what use is philosophy, if it cannot preserve us from this ridiculous and vain susceptibility Leibnitz died in 1716. He wrote a great deal upon tolerance. We find in his works some very reprehensible principles; however, he never mentions the sacred books but with respect: *they are filled*, said he, *with a morality necessary to man.* He said also, we ought to judge of the works of God as wisely as Socrates did those of Heraclitus, by saying, *that which I comprehend, pleases me; I believe the rest would not please me less, if I understood it.*

The seventeenth century produced also a naturalist of distinguished merit, Tournefort, born in 1656. We are indebted to him for the best system of botany which has yet been imagined; the learned in that science are at present divided betwixt it and that of Linnæus; but it is presumed they will return entirely to that of Tournefort; his method is simpler and clearer,

clearer, and the indicating characters more striking and easy of retention.

Vol. II. p. 77.

(10.) I have dared to say, that the chiefs of the Encyclopédical sect, the editors of the Encyclopédie, M. M. d'Alembert and Diderot, were bad writers. The proofs I shall be furnished with by themselves; those alone appear to me without reply. I will not criticise; I will quote; the reader will judge.

The following passage is from M. Diderot, drawn from his *Pensées sur l'Interprétation de la Nature*.

‘ La véritable manière de philosopher seroit d’appliquer l’entendement à l’entendement, l’entendement & l’expérience aux sens, les sens à la nature, la nature à l’investigation des instrumens, les instrumens à la recherche & à la perfection des arts qu’on jetteroit au peuple pour lui apprendre à respecter la philosophie.’

‘ The true manner of philosophizing would be to apply understanding to understanding, the understanding and experience to the senses, the senses to nature, nature to the investigation of instruments, instruments to the discovery and perfection of the arts, which should be thrown to the people, to make them respect philosophy.’

I do not know if that can be called *the true manner of philosophizing*; but certainly it is not *the true manner of reasoning* justly and clearly.

Another passage from the same book runs thus :

‘ L’animal est un système de molécules organiques, qui par l’impulsion d’une sensation semblable à un toucher obtus & sourd, que celui qui a créé la machine leur a communiquée, se font combinées jusqu’à ce que chacune ait rencontré la place la plus convenable à son repos.’

‘ An animal is a system of organised atoms, which, by the impulsion of a sensation like to a dull dark touch, which he who created the machine communicated to them, combined and arranged themselves till
‘ each

‘ each one found the place the most commodious for its repose.’

An author (who is not a *philosopher* *) remarks, in quoting this same passage, that this is called ‘ defining one obscure thing by another yet more obscure, and is what Boileau happily nominated *du galimatias double*’—the essence of jargon.

But let us see how M. Diderot explains what is neither abstract nor obscure, and which is within the reach of all the world.—In speaking of theatrical illusion, he says :

‘ Cette illusion dépend des circonstances ; ce sont les circonstances qui la rendent plus ou moins difficile à produire. Me permettra-t-on de parler un moment la langue des géomètres ? On sait ce qu’ils appellent une equation. L’illusion est seule d’un côté. C’est une quantité constante, qui est égale à une somme de termes, les uns positifs, les autres négatifs, dont le nombre & la combinaison peuvent varier sans fin, mais dont la valeur totale est toujours la même ; les termes positifs représentent les circonstances communes, & les négatifs, les circonstances extraordinaires ; il faut qu’elles se rachettent les unes par les autres.’

‘ This illusion depends on circumstances, which circumstances render it more or less difficult to be produced. Will it be permitted me for a moment to speak the language of a geometrician ? We know what they call an equation. The illusion is only on one side. It is a constant quantity, which is equal to the sum of the terms, the one positive, the other negative, of which the number and combination may vary without end, but whose total value is always the same ; the positive terms represent the common circumstances, the negative, the extraordinary ones, the one must redeem the other.’

This ingenious method of applying to literature the terms, expressions, and comparisons drawn from geo-

* M. Palissot.

metry.

metry, would have appeared very ridiculous to the good authors in the age of Louis XIV; their writings offer no trace of such bad taste as the modern philosophers have introduced amongst us, even into society. I recollect, when very young, and little acquainted with this language, to have heard a man say, who wished to speak in favour of a lady, that, *elle a toutes les données qui me plaisent* :---*she had all the given quantities to please*. But I have since had many other subjects of astonishment. However, this absurd introduction of scientific words into conversation and works of literature, is but an old fashion renewed; it was proscribed in the age of elegance and taste, but it existed and was admired in those which preceded it. In 1406, a very celebrated author of that time spoke, on the subject of the schism of the two popes, Benoit and Innocent, as follows :

‘ Hélas ! le schisme présent n’a-t-il pas bien fourme
 ‘ d’un cercle où l’on ne trouve ne fin ne issue ? Plusi-
 ‘ eurs ont été autres schismes, mais ce ne furent que
 ‘ demis cercles, ce n’étoient que lignes droites où on
 ‘ trouvoit tantôt le bout & le mettoit-on en leur affin ?
 ‘ . . . Si les parties de la circonference touchoient au
 ‘ point du milieu, le cercle seroit despécié. Ainsi
 ‘ semble-t-il des deux seigneurs desquels dépend cette
 ‘ besogne, &c.’---*Histoire Ecclésiastique, par l’Abbé*
de Fleuri, tom 21.

‘ Alas ! has not the present schism the form of a
 ‘ circle, where neither end nor issue is to be found ?
 ‘ Many other schisms have happened, but they were
 ‘ no more than half circles, they were strait lines only
 ‘ where the end was soon found. If the parts of the
 ‘ circumference touched the point in the middle, the
 ‘ circle would be broken to pieces. Thus does it ap-
 ‘ pear with the two lords on whom this business de-
 ‘ pends, &c.’---*Histoire Ecclésiastique, par l’Abbé de*
Fleuri, tom. 21.

This discourse was found sublime, and we have no right to laugh at such an age. The circle of that orator is worth the equation of our philosopher. It

appears

appears to me, that in taste and elegance *the given quantities of these two writers are equal.*

If examples of the style of M. Diderot be wished for, let us hear how naturally he speaks of virtue.

‘Malheur à celui qui ne lui a pas assez sacrifié pour la préférer à tout, ne vivre que pour elle, *s’enivrer de sa douce vapeur*, & trouver la fin de ses jours dans cette ivresse!’—Le Fils naturel.

‘Misfortune to him who has not sacrificed enough to her to prefer her to every thing, to live but for her, *to intoxicate himself with her sweet odours*, and to find the end of his day in that intoxication!’—Le Fils naturel.

It is he also, who in the same work says:

‘On a une idée juste de la chose; elle est présente à la mémoire; cherche-t-on l’expression, on ne la trouve pas. On combine les mots de grave & d’aigu, de prompt & de lent, de doux & de fort, mais le résidu toujours trop lâche ne retient rien. . . . Un musicien saisira le cri de la nature, lorsqu’il se produit violent & inarticulé, il en fera la base de sa mélodie, c’est *sur les cordes de cette mélodie* qu’il fera gronder la foudre, &c. &c.’

‘We have a just idea of the thing; it is present to the memory: if we seek for the expression, we cannot find it. We combine the words with flats and sharps, with quick and slow, with soft and strong; but the net, always too relaxed, retains nothing. . . . The musician seizes the cry of nature, when violently and articulately produced, he makes it the foundation of his melody; *it is on the cords of this melody* that he makes the thunder roar, &c. &c.’

Passages of this kind are really curious: an infinity of others are to be found, equally ridiculous, and by the same author, in two works of M. Palissot—*Mémoires pour servir à l’Histoire de notre Littérature*—& *Petites lettres sur les grands Philosophes.*

At present let us look at some specimens of M. d’Alembert’s style; I will copy a grand passage, a passage of pretension. Let us not judge lightly, upon
his

his long, well-wrought, finished periods, upon an *important parallel*.—Ne feroit-il pas facile de comparer ensemble nos trois plus grands maîtres en poésie, Despréaux, Racine, & M. de Voltaire? Ne pourroit-on pas dire, pour exprimer les différences qui les caractérisent, que Despréaux frappe & fabrique très-heureusement ses vers; que Racine jette les siens dans une espèce de moule parfait, qui décèle la main de l'artiste sans en conserver l'empreinte; & que M. de Voltaire laissant comme échapper des vers qui coulent de source, semble parler, sans art & sans étude, sa langue naturelle? Ne pourroit-on pas observer, qu'en lisant Despréaux, on conclut & on sent le travail; que dans Racine, on le conclut sans le sentir, parce que si d'un côté la facilité continue en écarte l'apparence, de l'autre la perfection continue en rappelle sans cesse l'idée au lecteur; qu'enfin, dans M. de Voltaire le travail ne peut ni se sentir ni se conclure, parce que les vers moins soignés qui lui échappent par intervalles, laissent croire que les beaux vers qui précèdent & qui suivent, n'ont pas coûté davantage au poète? Enfin ne pourroit-on pas ajouter, en cherchant dans les chef-d'œuvres des beaux-arts, un objet sensible de comparaison entre ses trois grands écrivains; que la manière de Despréaux, correcte, ferme & nerveuse, est assez bien représentée par la belle statue du gladiateur; celle de Racine, aussi correcte, mais plus molleuse & plus arrondie, par la Vénus Médicis; & celle de M. de Voltaire, aisée, svelte & toujours noble, par l'Apollon du Belvédère.

‘ Would it be difficult to compare together our three great masters in poetry, Despreaux, Racine, and Voltaire*? May we not say, to express the difference which

* The author observes, in a note, that M. de Voltaire lived when this discourse was pronounced.—*May we not observe also*, that it is very singular J. Baptiste Rousseau was not placed in the rank of *our great masters in poetry*? Was it because he had not composed a tragedy? Despreaux was

‘ which characterises each, that Despreaux very happily struck and fabricated his verses; that Racine cast his in a kind of perfect mould, which discovers the hand of the artist, without preserving the impression; and that M. de Voltaire, permitting, as it were, some verses, flowing from their source, to escape, without art and study, they seem to speak their natural tongue?—May we not observe, when reading Despreaux, that we suppose and feel the labour; that in Racine we suppose without feeling it, because, if on the one side, the continual facility removes its appearance, on the other, the continual perfection incessantly recalls its idea to the reader? in short, that in M. de Voltaire it is neither supposed nor perceived: because the less correct lines, which escape by intervals, induce us to believe, that the elegant verses which precede, or follow, were produced with the same ease by the poet? In short, can we not find a sensible object of comparison betwixt these three great writers, amongst the master-pieces of the fine arts? May we not say, that Despreaux’s manner, correct, firm, and nervous, is well represented by the fine statue of the gladiator*; that Racine’s as correct, but softer and more harmonious, by the Venus de Medicis; and that Voltaire’s, easy, light, and always noble, by the Apollo Belvidere†?’

Was not a dramatic writer.—It is said we may compose a very brilliant tragedy, without being a great poet: but that it is necessary to be *born a poet* to compose a good ode: M. de Voltaire never produced a good one, and those of Rousseau are sublime. In fact, *as a poet* the name of Rousseau is one of the first which presents itself to the memory. But Voltaire was yet alive.

* Is it the *dying or fighting* gladiator? These two statues are equally *fine*. The author ought not to have left us in this incertitude; but he had never been at Rome, and, perhaps, had never heard speak but of one.

† Of all the antique statues, that of the Apollo Belvidere is the only one from which a good copy was never taken; and the author had never seen the original. Thus, supposing he had taste, it is evident he places M. de Voltaire

Was there ever such a singular diffusive jargon written; so fatiguing, heavy, such absurd expressions, and discordant language? Despreaux, who *frappe & fabrique*, strikes and manufactures, represents to the ear what the poet intended to describe when laughing at the chaplain—and *that kind of perfect mould* of Racine, and the strange definition, *que l'on conclut & on sent*, suppose and feel the labour of the one—and *que l'on conclut sans le sentir*, that we infer, without feeling, the labour of the other—and that *qu'on ne peut ni conclure ni sentir*, we can neither infer nor perceive it in the third—All this is so ridiculous, that it is really inconceivable how any person of understanding, or even common sense, could write such trash.

The same author says, that *sentiment* was a kind of *sense* which Despreaux wanted. He adds,

‘ Car si le poëte doit avoir le tact sur le goût sévère pour connoître ce qu’il doit saisir ou rejeter, si l’imagination qui est pour lui comme *le sens de la vue*, doit lui représenter vivement les objets & les revêtir de ce coloris brillant dont il anime ses tableaux; *la sensibilité, espèce d’odoat* d’une finesse exquise, va chercher profondément dans la substance de tout ce qui s’offre à elle, ces émotions fugitives, mais d’licieuses, dont la douce impression ne se fait sentir qu’aux seules âmes dignes de l’éprouver.’

‘ For if the poet should have a just delicacy of taste to know what he ought to embrace or reject; if imagination, to him *the sense of seeing*, should warmly represent those objects, and cloath them with the brilliant colours which animate his pictures; *sensibility,*

taire below Racine. However, it is agreeable to know that Racine’s manner of writing is *Arrondie*, and M. de Voltaire’s, *Svelte* †.

† Those who are acquainted with French will easily understand the poignancy of this criticism; and those who are not, would have but a faint idea of it from a translation.—TRANSLATOR.

* One would imagine the author was defining *the sensibility of a dog*, who attaches himself to persons, and discovers them by the smell; by which we might say, in speaking

‘*lity, a kind of smelling, of exquisite delicacy* *, penetrates deeply into every substance which presents itself; its transient but delicious emotions are felt by those souls alone which are worthy of proving its sweet impression †.’

Imagination, which is like the sense of seeing—sensitivity, a kind of smelling, which penetrates deeply into every substance of fugitive emotions—do not appear to be very happy comparisons. This, though less abstract, is not in better taste.

‘Despréaux, qui ne vouloit pas *qu’on fût tiède* pour les anciens, ne vit dans l’ami de Perrault que leur ennemi déclaré: il le traita comme le voyageur traite la cigale qu’il rencontre parmi des sauterelles, & qu’il écrase avec elles impitoyablement, par la seule raison qu’elle a le malheur de se trouver dans une compagnie qui lui d’*plait* *.’

‘Despreaux, who did not like *people should be lukewarm* respecting the ancients, saw, in the friend of Perrault, nothing but their declared enemy: he treated him as the traveller treats the balm-cricket, or cicada, which he meets amongst the grasshoppers; he crushes it, with them, without pity, for the sole reason that it had the misfortune to be found in company with those who displeased him *.’

I have travelled a great deal, and have read many accounts of travels, yet I never heard speak of the traveller’s mortal antipathy against grasshoppers. I can easily believe, that in walking we may crush grasshoppers and balm-crickets, as we do ants, spiders, and other insects, but without pursuing them in such a merciless manner. Besides, this friend of Perrault, M. de Fontenelle, was by no means crushed by Despreaux.—The satires of the former did no harm either to the fortune or reputation of the latter.—In short, Despreaux did not hate Fontenelle, *for the sole reason that he had*

speaking of this animal, *Sa sensibilité, espèce d’odorat d’une finesse exquise*.—His sensibility, a kind of smelling of exquisite delicacy.

† Eloge de Despréaux.

* Ibid.

the

the misfortune to be found in company with those who displeased him; but he hated him, because he did not admire the ancients; as the author explains it himself, who says, in the same eulogium, 'That Fontenelle ' was persuaded that literature ought, as well as philosophy, to shake off the yoke of authority, and not to ' subscribe, but by conviction, to the admiration even ' of twenty ages. This was declaring against the ' blind adoration of Pindar and Homer with a freedom ' and liberty which lost him the heart of Despreaux.'

Thus, this comparison is, in all its members, as false as it is insipid and puerile.—Here is another, still more ridiculous, on the subject of Crebillon's piece, called *Pyrrhus*, which was well received by the public.

*' Mais l'accueil fut passager, & l'ouvrage a disparu ' de dessus la scène, comme un collatéral éloigné, intrus dans une succession qui ne lui appartient pas, est ' obligé de renoncer au partage qu'il prétendoit faire ' avec les héritiers légitimes *.'*

*' But the reception was transient, and the work disappeared from above the scenes, as a distant relation, ' intruded into a succession which does not belong to ' him, is obliged to renounce the division he pretended ' to make with the legitimate heirs *.'*

What taste! what style! what ideas, at once trivial, false, and singular!—But here is a judgment more surprising than all this.

' One of our most celebrated brothers . . . has remarked, with great reason, whatever may be said by ' vulgar critics, that the two illustrious founders of tragedy amongst us appear to be more attached to paint ' men than nations; that Racine never described any ' but the Jews; Corneille, but the Romans and Spaniards; and that Monsieur de Voltaire alone had ' drawn a picture of all mankind, Greeks, Romans, ' French, Spaniards, Americans, Chinese, and Arabians †.'

Do we really believe, that tragic authors attach themselves to the description of nations? Do we be-

lieve,

* Eloge de Crebillon.

† Ibid.

lieve, that the Orphan of China gives a description of the Chinese nation? that Zara paints the manners of the Turks, and the customs of the Seraglio? This piece, on the contrary, from one end to the other, presents manners, usages, and sentiments, of which the history of that people offers no example. Do we believe, that the Americans, whose history represents them so mild, so easy to be frightened, and to be conquered, are faithfully retraced in the noble characters of Zamora and Alzira, so full of grandeur and energy? But, admitting that M. de Voltaire *had*, in fact, *painted all these people*, how dare we assert, that Racine *never drew the character but of one nation, the Jews*? It is true, he has painted the Jews, and with admirable truth, because he had made the scriptures his particular study; but did he never write any other tragedies than Esther and Athalie? Has he not also painted the Turks? *Bajazet* certainly gives a better idea of their manners and character, than *Zara*.—M. de Voltaire *described the Greeks and Romans*; and was not Racine the author of *Phédre*, *Iphigénie*, *Andromaque*, *Britannicus*, *Mitridate*, *Bérénice*, &c.? Though the eulogiums of *all the brothers* of the author should unite to support, that Racine *never described any but the Jews*, we should be obliged to join the vulgar critics, and to answer with respect, but by positive facts such as those I have just cited.

If we mean, by *describing nations*, the introduction of personages upon the theatre, to whom we give different names, we may say also, that Corneille has drawn the people of Egypt (in the death of Pompey), the Parthians (in *Rodogune*), the Spaniards, and many other nations. But, if we speak reasonably, we should say, he has only painted the Romans in the time of their grandeur and glory; and that he alone knew how to paint them.

In the eulogium of Destouches, M. d'Alembert says, that the piece which succeeded at Paris was but little esteemed in the country, 'because the author painted the manners of Paris, rather than those of
' the

‘ the nation ; those of *the moment*, rather than those of *the year* ; and the jargon of to-day, rather than that of to-morrow.’ What a ridiculous critique !— Without revelation, we can paint only what exists ; and should our manners change to-morrow, he must be a prophet who can paint the revolution. These little extravagances of the mind, this total want of common sense, we meet with continually in these eulogiums : the author, equally destitute of imagination, taste, and sentiment, is ever a servile and weak imitator, sometimes of Fontenelle, sometimes of Voltaire ; like the last, he is lavish in his quotations of witticisms and little anecdotes, which are ever fatiguing and puerile, when too much made use of, and insufferable in works of a noble or serious kind ; particularly when we are not very delicate in the choice of these little ornaments, and when we overload, without distinction, an academical discourse with all the common-place expressions with which we can charge our memory.

Let us hear the author again, when he wishes to discover *sensibility*.

‘ Un sentiment profond & plein de vie, privé d’un objet chéri qu’il ne retrouvoit plus, & ne pouvant supporter l’idée accablante d’être anéanti pour jamais * a inspiré, éclairé, intéressé la raison pour lui faire embrasser avec transport cette attente précieuse d’une existence immortelle, dont le premier désir n’a pas dû naître *dans une tête froide & philosophique*, mais dans un cœur qui avoit aimé †.’

‘ A profound and lively passion, deprived of a dear object which it could not find again, and not being able to support the distressing idea of being annihili-

* Qu’est-ce qu’un sentiment plein de vie privé d’un objet & qui ne peut supporter une idée, &c.—What inconceivable jargon !

† Eloge de M. de Sacy.—La négation *n’a pas* dû naître, &c. fait une faute de langage dans la phrase : *mais dans un cœur qui avoit aimé*.

‘ lated

'lated for ever †, has inspired, enlightened, and interested reason to induce it to embrace, with transport, the precious confidence of an immortal existence, the first desire of which was not produced in a cold philosophical head, but in a heart which had loved ‡.'

I think I have sufficiently proved, that M. M. Diderot and d'Alembert are bad writers. I could have multiplied quotations, had they been necessary. We may find, in the works of a great writer, weak passages, negligences of style, and even some imperfect expressions *; but we shall never find long ridiculous periods, phrases void of sense, and whole pages of bombast and jargon absolutely unintelligible.—J. J. Rousseau, the least correct and the most unequal of all our great writers, never offers any thing like this: he is not always brilliant or sublime; he is often negligent, diffusive, and languid; he is sometimes a little pompous, but it is very rarely, and with such circumspection, as preserves him, if not from criticism, at least from ridicule: and thus it is that, even in his absent moments, a superior writer never entirely forsakes good taste and reason.

I should never have entered into this detail, if it had not been important and useful to prove, to young people who may read this work, that these pretended philosophers, who have affected so much irreligion, and who have been the creators and editors of a dictionary which so often injures religion, had by no means that superiority of mind and talents which their partisans have attributed to them.

† What is a lively sentiment deprived of an object, and which cannot support an idea? &c.—What inconceivable jargon!

‡ Elogé de M. de Sacy.—The negation, *n'a pas dû naître*, &c. is a faulty expression—but in a heart which had loved.

* As when Rousseau repeats, in *Emile*, *Comme que tout aille peu lui importe*, &c.—However things are, is to him of little consequence.

I have advanced, that the *Encyclopédie* contained a multitude of articles against religion and morals; and I have indicated one, the word *Population*.—It may be said, perhaps, that though the editors, without doubt, ought to be responsible for the work which they publish, yet this is so considerable, that it is possible the articles of this kind might have escaped their inspection.—To that I shall answer, first, that by the particular works which they have given, it is proved that these articles accorded with their principles: secondly, that these articles are too often multiplied to have been inserted without their knowledge: and, thirdly, that their real design, in this work, was to attack and destroy religion; that it was their principal project, and that we cannot doubt of it, because one of them declares it very expressly in one of the articles of the work—the word *Encyclopédie*.—Let us hear M. Diderot himself, who develops all his philosophical artifices on this subject: he speaks of the order and manner which have been followed in composing this dictionary.—‘I distinguish,’ says he, ‘two kinds of references, the one of things, the other of words. The references of things explain the object, indicate its remote connections with others we might believe unconnected, &c. . . . But when we want them, they produce a contrary effect; they oppose notions, and contrast principles; they attack, shake, and secretly overthrow some ridiculous opinions which we should not dare insult openly. If the author be impartial, they will have the double function to confirm and refute, to confound and conciliate.

‘There would arise great and infinite advantage from these last references. The whole work would receive from it an internal force and secret utility, the hidden effects of which would necessarily be felt in time.—Whenever, for example, a national prejudice should merit respect, it must, at its proper article, be respectfully exposed, and with all its train of probability and seduction; but to overthrow an edifice of mud, to dissipate a vain collection of dust, refer it to the articles, where solid principles serve as
 ‘ a base

a base to opposite truths.—This manner of undeceiving men operates very readily upon good minds; infallibly, and without any disagreeable consequences, secretly and without noise, on all.—It is the art of silently deducing the strongest inferences.—If the references of confirmation and refutation be seen from afar, and prepared with address, they will give to the Encyclopedie the character a good dictionary ought to have; that is, *to change the common mode of thinking*. The work which produces this general effect, will have defects in the execution; this I allow; but the plan and foundation will be excellent.—The work which produces nothing like this must be bad; whatever good may be said of it in other respects, its praises will pass away, and the work will fall into oblivion* . . . And lastly, a kind of reserved reference, which may be either of the word or the thing; they are what I should be inclined to call satirical or epigrammatic; such as, for example, is found in one of our articles, where, at the end of a long pompous eulogium, one reads, *see Capuchon*. —The burlesque word *Capuchon*, and that which is found in the article, might make us believe that the pompous eulogium was but irony, that we must read

* This is the great secret, not only of this sect, but of every other; it is necessary to make a noise, to overthrow and to bring about a revolution; it is thus men render themselves famous at little expence, that is to say, without talents.—*The character of a good dictionary is to change the common mode of thinking*. And should the mode of thinking be useful and reasonable? That is not the question; it is, to compile a book so daring, that it *may never fall into oblivion*. The dictionary which was only learned and judicious, *would be bad*; it would always be consulted but never spoke of, and that would not answer the purposes of philosophers.—If the editors of the Encyclopedie possessed not the talents of Bayle, they had at least the same view, the same ideas of the manner which ought to be employed for compiling a *good dictionary*.—Bayle could have given us this same definition, but he possessed too much art and understanding to unmask himself with such astonishing impropriety.

the article with precaution, and weigh exactly all its terms.

I would not entirely suppress these references, because they are sometimes useful; they may be secretly directed against certain follies, as the philosophical reference against certain prejudices. It is sometimes a delicate and light means of repelling an injury, almost without assuming the defensive, and to tear the mask from a great personage.—See, in the *Encyclopédie*, the word *Encyclopédie*.*

Is it possible that authors can thus openly declare their intentions, and expose themselves with so much imprudence? that which renders this article as ridiculous as it is revolting, is, that the author boasts of his address, his management, and glories in employing *delicate and light means only*. Of what use are all these precautions, these artifices, so well conceived and so subtly imagined, when so long and positive an explication of them is given?

After the unequivocal proofs which I have produced, can I be accused of having criticised such works with too much acrimony? As mother and governess, ought I not to expose, as much as possible, such pernicious designs and principles? Ought I not to endeavour to preserve youth from a dangerous and ill-founded admiration of men, whose intention was to destroy whatever is esteemed most useful and sacred? Opinions and sentiments inspired by conscience, and founded on virtue, ought to be invariable; consistent with these principles, there will be found, in my first works, and all those I have since written, the same ideas which I have here developed on pretended philosophers, modern philosophy, and religion*. My criticisms are, I dare aver, as impartial as my intentions are pure.—Should it be supposed that the multitudes of libels made against me (as I am told) and the many satirical and incorrect extracts from my works, might have inspired me with some secret resentment? In presenting *Adèle &*

* Amongst others, in *Adèle & Théodore*.

Théodore, I expected and had foreseen them all, without having the weakness to fear, or the vanity to desire them; for fame was not my ambition. But before my *Lettres sur l'Education* appeared, I had no enemies †; nothing had ever been written against me: I had, on the contrary, received universal testimonies of excessive indulgence. In this situation, however, I determined to publish *Les Lettres*, in which I expressed, with all the force I was capable, the sentiments, principles, and opinions which are found again in this work.—Here is then one indubitable proof that it is not resentment which inspires me at present; besides, whence should this resentment come? What harm have they done, what harm can they do to me? Socrates said to his slave, *I would beat thee if I were not angry*. For my part, if I cannot fight, I may at least attack, for I have not lost my temper. In a word, I cannot hate, it is a *philosophical faculty*, in which I am absolutely deficient.

Vol. II. page 79.

(II.) The author of *l'Esprit des Philosophes irréligieux* supports, with reason, that religious sentiments give to works of genius an interest and grandeur which augment their beauty; this he proves by a parallel, which will surely be read with pleasure.

‘ What majesty! what images! what a prodigy of
 ‘ eloquence is Bossuet’s discourse on universal history!
 ‘ —On fut étonné (dit M. de Voltaire) de cette force
 ‘ majestueuse, dont il a décrit les mœurs, le gouverne-
 ‘ ment, l’accroissement & la chute des grands empires,
 ‘ & de ces traits rapides d’une vérité énergique, dont
 ‘ il peint & dont il juge les nations. . . . Ce discours
 ‘ n’a eu ni modèles, ni imitateurs: son style n’a trouvé
 ‘ que des admirateurs.—Men were astonished (says
 ‘ M. de Voltaire) at the majestic force with which he
 ‘ describes manners, governments, the rise and fall of
 ‘ great empires, and at those rapid passages of energy-

† I had then only written *le Théâtre d'Education*.

‘tic truth, with which he paints and judges nations. . .
 ‘This discourse never had either model or imitator;
 ‘its style found admirers only*.’

‘It is in effect a very astonishing phenomenon, to
 ‘see a writer appear for the first time, after so many
 ‘ages elapsed without any one having dared to aspire
 ‘to partake the glory of Cicero and Demosthenes,
 ‘and who should at once leap over this great interval,
 ‘place himself on a level with these extraordinary geniuses,
 ‘and elevate himself above the greatest orators
 ‘even of Greece or Rome. Was that the triumph of
 ‘human eloquence only? And Bossuet, was he wholly
 ‘indebted to the fecundity of his brilliant imagination,
 ‘for that vigour, pomp, and, above all, that
 ‘august character of a dignity and wisdom in which
 ‘even the rays of the Divinity seem to shine? Let us
 ‘declare this one truth, which can escape those only
 ‘who will not see, which is that the sublime thoughts
 ‘of faith have an astonishing power to confer on great
 ‘talents the appearance of the marvellous, and to
 ‘bear true genius to an extraordinary degree of elevation.
 ‘It is, that Bossuet contemplated, in the
 ‘great light of religion, that is to say, from the height
 ‘even of infinite intelligence, the grand theatre of the
 ‘world, and the series of the great revolutions of empires;
 ‘and that, shewing us the design of an eternal
 ‘and profound wisdom, in the midst of those vicissitudes
 ‘which shake and change the face of the universe, he
 ‘makes us admire in the picture wherein all the kingdoms
 ‘of the earth, and human events are united in
 ‘one point of view, a harmony, in which every thing
 ‘moves, clashes, is thrown down and raised up again,

* Let us take notice, as we go along, that *de cette force dont il décrit les mœurs*, is not French. *On décrit avec force*; but we do not say, *la force dont on décrit le gouvernement*, &c. The last phrase in this passage, which is so disagreeable to the ear, is also deficient in exactness. We may say, very well, that a writer has *point eu d’imitateurs*, but we cannot say that a discourse *n’a eu ni imitateurs ni modèles*.

‘ by

by divine springs, and wherein all the histories of time are but preparatives to the history of eternity, and of the empire which cannot be destroyed, *established on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets*. Montefquieu, when we study and follow him in the work of his profound combinations, presents us at bottom the same soul, the same dignity of mind, as the celebrated bishop of Meaux; that is to say, in both we are struck with that amazing capacity of reason which embraces every thing, and that superiority of intelligence which knows how to assemble and reduce to a simple consequence, interesting for every age, the infinite variety of revolutions dispersed in the immensity of time.—Montefquieu confined himself to the period of human things, and his design did not extend beyond it. But Bossuet had regulated his meditations on a much larger plan; his intention was, if we may use the expression, to join the whole œconomy of the present world, to the eternal system of the supreme wisdom.—The one keeps us circumscribed in the circle of the laws, manners, and passions of mankind, to unveil to us the springs of the great event, to explain to us the formation, growth, decline, and ruin of empires. The other makes us contemplate, in the center of all, the motion of human interests, and in the great crash of empires and thrones, which rise, clash, and fall on each other, an invisible and eternal power, which conducts in silence, through all these agitations and ruins, a design of a superior order; to accomplish which, by a skilful and profound management, all the revolutions and vicissitudes of kingdoms and generations which pass, are instrumental to the increase and glory of that kingdom which shall remain for ever.—The first never quits the history of governments, to indicate the great shocks that have so often changed the destiny of human-kind, but leaves us in the middle of the vast universe, where every thing totters and succeeds, without clearing up the final catastrophe of

‘ so many various spectacles. The last makes every
 ‘ thing fly back to its eternal source, and presents,
 ‘ beyond the limits of time, the ravishing per-
 ‘ spective of a fixed and incorruptible world, which
 ‘ shall be raised upon the enormous ruins of this
 ‘ globe we inhabit, and where every thing shall be
 ‘ transformed into the splendor and immutability of
 ‘ the infinite Being.—Thus these two geniuses, of
 ‘ which the Augustan age would be proud, resemble
 ‘ without equalling each other; and eloquence has
 ‘ left the palm in the hand of Bossuet. O what fe-
 ‘ cundity and amplitude does religion give to the mind,
 ‘ which knows how to consider it in the true light of
 ‘ its magnificence and grandeur!—No, religion alone
 ‘ can bestow this extraordinary intelligence, elevate
 ‘ genius above itself, and make it launch out of the
 ‘ limits prescribed to whatever is human. It is she
 ‘ who enlarges every sphere. She alone has the gift
 ‘ of giving life to every thing; she produces prodig-
 ‘ ies, wherever man suffers her light to shine; she im-
 ‘ presses on all talents, as well as on those of virtue, a
 ‘ supernatural and divine seal, and produces great men
 ‘ as well as great saints.’

Let us add also, that the other authors of the last age were particularly indebted to their faith in the Scriptures, and their study of them, for that elevation of sentiment, that sublimity of thought, which we admire in *Telemaque*, in the *Pensées de Pascal*, in *Poëlieucte*, in *Athalie*, &c. He who believes neither the existence of God, nor the immortality of the soul, is deprived of every thing which can really increase sensibility or exalt imagination.—In a word, the study of the Scriptures, though at this time neglected, have produced the finest passages in the works of Fenelon, Bossuet, Racine, and Jean Baptiste Rousseau. Without speaking of *Esther* and *Athalie*, Racine has inserted in his other pieces many passages drawn from Scripture; for example, in *Phèdre*, many sublime ideas are found, which are not in Euripides, but which may
 be

be seen in Psalm cxxxix. 7, 8.—‘ Whither shall I go
‘ then from thy spirit : or whither shall I go then from
‘ thy presence ? If I climb up into heaven, thou art
‘ there : if I go down to hell, thou art there also.’

Vol. II. p. 80.

(12.) Michel Montaigne was born at the castle of that name in Périgord, in 1533.---He was mayor of the city of Bordeaux. His essays contain many bad Principles and licentious details ; but we find also many Passages of excellent morality, feeling sensibility, and even a great depth of religion.---Montaigne was of irreproachable probity, and of the most amiable and mild disposition. He loved to study man, particularly in *inexperienced souls*, like those of children or country people. In his last illness he shewed the greatest sentiments of piety. He died in 1592, at the age of sixty.

Vol. II. p. 81.

(13.) I proved, in the twenty-second chapter of this work, that the detractors of religion attacked it with sophisms only, drawn from the writings of Spinoza, Montaigne, Hobbes, Bayle, Collins, Shaftesbury, &c. ; and consequently that our pretended philosophers have been the mere echoes and copyists of past ages ; that those arguments, which they have given us as *new ideas*, *new lights*, have been despised, refuted, and in short, were forgotten : I have added more, that even these unbelievers, Spinoza, Hobbes, Montaigne, Bayle, and the rest, did nothing but repeat what ignorance, impiety, incredulity, and the desire of gaining a name, inspired, in more remote times, to ambitious sectaries, and which were first refuted by the fathers of the church, and since by the learned writings of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and other great men of the last age.—This is what remains to be proved.—Le Dictionnaire des Hérésies (the heretical dictionary) will furnish me the proofs, and the faithful picture of all

the systems and philosophical opinions, which to many people have appeared of such poignant novelty *.

The *Adamites*. This sect was established towards the year 746; it held, that the human soul is an emanation of the Supreme Intelligence; and, being a part of the Divinity, all the actions of the soul, united to the body, ought to be regarded as emotions only, indifferent in themselves, which throw no blemish on the dignity natural to man. This sect rejected prayer and worship: its principles hurried it into the most horrid excesses of every kind †.

Les Albanois. The Albanois, a sect of the eighth century, denied original sin and free-will. They believed the world eternal, and condemned marriage ‡.

Amauri, a sect of the twelfth century, taught that God was not different from original matter.

* I cannot present, in a note, more than the essence of opinions; however, they were supported with much art and subtlety, as every one may be convinced by reading the work indicated, and *l'Histoire Ecclesiastique de M. de Fleuri*.—Retrenching only from the history of the heresies, the different *systems of religion* (for these heads of parties desired to preserve a religion) and suppressing neither the particulars nor the arguments, we should have a long continuation of volumes, which would offer but an exact and faithful repetition of all which our philosophical books contain. If we add to this, many passages taken from the pagan philosophers, and some chosen texts from *Montaigne*, *Hobbes*, *Spinoza*, and *Bayle*, our pretended modern philosophers will find themselves absolutely and entirely stripped. This work would certainly be very poignant and useful.

† *Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Egaremens de l'Esprit humain, ou Dictionnaire des Hérésies*, par M: Pluquet, tome i. p. 30.—I shall quote the page no more; I will follow the order of the dictionary. If it be wished to verify the exactness of the quotations, the book may be examined under the name of the sect. When I break this order, I will indicate the page.

‡ This last sentiment we find in the book intitled *Les Mœurs*, of which I have spoken in the course of this work.

Hutter and Gabriel taught, that worldly goods ought to be held in common; that societies, wherein this equality was not established, ought to be regarded as impious; and that worship ought to be confined to the heart only *.

The *Anabaptists* formed many sects, famous for their follies and irregularities. Some of them supported, that every kind of servitude was degrading; others, that joy and feasting were the most perfect homages that could be presented to the Author of nature; others pretended that we might indifferently choose the religion the most convenient, or that which we liked the best †.

Arabes, ou Arabiens; a title given to a sect, which, in the third century, attacked the immortality of the soul. There was held, in Arabia, on this subject, a great assembly, at which Origen assisted: he spoke with so much solidity and moderation, that those who had fallen into this error of the Arabians, abandoned it entirely.

Les Arminiens supported, that we ought to believe that only which we can understand, and that we ought not to endeavour to convert others to our belief.

Arnaud de Villeneuve, another sectarist, pretended that God has not threatened eternal damnation to sinners.

Les Athociens, heretics of the thirteenth century, taught that the soul died with the body.

Les Beguards maintained, that we ought not to refuse nature any thing; that whatever she demands, or inspires, cannot be criminal. The excesses of this sect were abominable.

Les Nestoriens, of Syria, denied eternal punishments. Their manners served to prove the utility of the contrary belief.

* Page 81.

† Page 70.—We find in this paragraph the philosophers system of equality. Many other sects have maintained this opinion.

Consciencieux.

Conscientieux. The conscientious, was a name given to some ancient heretics, who acknowledged no other rule, or legislator, than *conscience*. This error was renewed, in the seventeenth century, by a German, called Mathias Knutzer, who, from this error, sunk into atheism.

La Famille, ou la Maison d'Amour. The *Family*, or *the House of Love*, was a sect which made all perfection consist in the exercise of beneficence. It pretended to be above laws, and had, upon *unlimited tolerance*, all the ideas of modern philosophers *. The first hereticks took the name of *Gnostics*. This word signified, *a learned and celebrated man*; and, in effect, those heretics boasted of possessing extraordinary knowledge and insight. They endeavoured to prove, that there are in the world an infinity of disorders, irregularities, and contradictions.—They fought, they said, but to instruct men.—According to them, the crime and debasement of man did not consist in satisfying his passions, but in looking upon them as the source of happiness, and as the end for which he was made.—Let us see how a Gnostic bishop justified his sect, convinced of the most shameful depravation.

‘ A Gnostic, a learned man, ought to know every thing. . . . Merit consists not in abstaining from pleasures, but to make use of them as their master; to govern voluptuality, even when held in her arms. For myself, it is thus I make use of them; I embrace them but to suppress them.’

In short, there were Gnostics, who believed that men were, in fact, but animals; that that spirituality, of which they were so proud, was a chimera; and that they differed from reptiles, volatiles, and quadrupeds, only by the configuration of their organs. This was the branch of the Gnostics which are called *Borborities*.

Hermias, chief of the heretics called Hermionites, adopted the error of Hermogenes on the eternity of the world. He taught, that the world was the only hell which existed.

* Volume ii. page 31.

Pelagius denied original sin. He flattered human pride, was eloquent, and had many sectaries.

‘It is not,’ said he, ‘to the corruption of nature that we ought to attribute our imperfections. Mankind came pure from the hands of the Creator. We take the vicious habits we have contracted for a corruption attached to human nature, and fall into an injustice which the Pagans avoided, &c *.’

Vigilance, a famous heretic of the fifth century, furiously attacked celibacy and vows.

Wickliff maintained, that *every thing happened necessarily*. He went to the primitive ideas even of the rights of man upon the earth; and pretended to prove, that the established rights of property and power were unjust and chimerical.

Zwingle pretended, it may be affirmatively assured, that Pagans who had virtue are saved; such as *Theseus*, *Hercules*, *Socrates*, *Antigonus*, &c †.

The following are the opinions of some heretics, and which I found in the *Encyclopédie*:

Bazilide, who died about the year of Christ 130, taught, that the soul was punished in this life; and that, far from combating the passions, it was necessary to be obedient, and give way to them.

* This is the beginning of *Emile*, of which the ideas were thought so new.

† See, with the names of the sectaries, all these articles in the *Dictionary of Heresies*, in two great volumes, by M. Pluquet. It may not be improper to observe, that the author has by no means the same intention, in collecting opinions, as I have here; and that he has even been reproached with having shewn in his work too great an inclination to modern philosophy; a very unjust reproach, in my opinion, and according to that of those who know the principles of religion well enough to be convinced that we cannot better seize his meaning, than by shewing contempt and hatred for persecutions. Besides, M. Pluquet establishes, with equal clearness and solidity, the proofs of the truth of religion. I regret not having been able to insert in this work several very striking passages from his.

Bayus,

Bayus, who lived under Charles V. maintained, that every good work is, in its nature, deserving of heaven, independent of the merits of Christ.

Robert Brown, chief of the sect which bore his name was an Englishman: he died in 1630. He condemned the religious celebration of marriages, and rejected every form of prayer.

The *Cainists* denied resurrection; they exhorted men to follow their inclinations.

We here discover, most certainly, all the principles, all the ideas, all the opinions, renewed and maintained, of modern pretended philosophers†. These errors, which flatter and favour human passions, will be renewed in every age: there will always be ambitious men, who, to please the multitude, will adopt these systems, and strive to establish them. They will seduce in frivolous and ignorant ages, and be despised in times wherein reason, sound morality, and the love of humanity, shall form the basis of philosophy.

These haughty men were always the same, as may easily be proved by the descriptions given of them by historians: two of which are as follow; they are literally copied, and will not appear new.

Donatus soon became the oracle and tyrant of the Donatists: they were, in his hands, a species of automats, to which he gave the motion and direction he chose. Donatus had the highest idea of his person, and the most profound contempt for men, magistrates, and even the emperor himself. His

† Excepting *l'Apologie du Suicide*, all these philosophical ideas are found in the History of Heresies. I might have extended these quotations, and the details would have rendered the relations I have indicated more striking; but in a single volume I can treat on no object in a complete manner; and it has not been possible for me to insert one half of the extracts which for the last five years I have made to compose this work. I thought that one volume* would, perhaps, be read; but I was certain that two, upon such a subject, would not.

* The original is comprised in one volume.

sectaries.

‘ sectaries adopted all his sentiments; the Donatists saw nobody superior to themselves but Donatus, and thought they were born to rule over the human mind, and command mankind in general. Animated by this species of fanaticism of self-love, which discovered itself but under appearances of zeal, they seduced many people *.’

The heretic *Vigilance*, of whom I have spoken, lived towards the end of the fourth century.

‘ *Vigilance* affected wit: he pointed a thought, but was a man of no reasoning; he preferred a *bon mot* to a good reason; he aimed at celebrity. He would write; he attacked every object wherein he found a subject of pleasantry †.’

These sectaries, in overturning all the principles of morality, produced an infinity of mischief and disorder: nevertheless, their project was not to destroy religion; they contented themselves with attacking some of its dogmas, but preserved the foundation. If they had the mad design of annihilating it, the empire they had usurped over mens minds would have been a thousand times more pernicious, and their sects infinitely more depraved.

This opinion has not been found in these extracts, *That self-love is the sole principle of our actions*; that is, that we do that only which satisfies us; and that we are inevitably constrained to do actions, to which we seem to determine ourselves with pain and effort; that consequently none of them are meritorious, &c. All these subtilties are, at the bottom, no more than the system of *fatality*, which so many philosophers and heretics have frequently maintained and renewed. Even the manner in which the author *de l'Esprit* has presented this idea, is by no means new: it is found in Montaigne, and many other ancient authors. It is

* Dictionnaire des Hérésies de M. Pluquet, tome ii. page 8.

† Ibid. tome ii. p. 621.

also well developed in an ode of Lamothe, addressed to M. de Brulart, bishop of Soissons. I will quote but a strophe of it :

‘ Que nos amis, que nos maîtresses,
 ‘ Objets apparens de nos vœux,
 ‘ Ne pensent pas que nos tendresses
 ‘ Ni que nos vrais soins soient pour eux ;
 ‘ Nos plaisirs font notre constance ;
 ‘ Pourquoi de leur reconnoissance
 ‘ Exigeons-nous l’injuste honneur.
 ‘ Que doivent-ils à notre ivresse ?
 ‘ Leur bonheur ne nous intéresse
 ‘ Qu’ autant qu’il est notre bonheur.”

These bad verses certainly present all the ideas, and the whole system, of which the novelty has been so much boasted in the book intitled *de l’Esprit*.

I will finish this article by a passage from history, which appears one of the best arguments to prove how odious and prejudicial persecutions are.

‘ The heretic Manés * taught his doctrine at Cascar and Diodoride. Archelaus combated it with the arms of reason and religion : he dissipated his sophisms, and displayed the truth of Christianity in its proper light. Manés was looked upon by all the people in the province as an impostor : nobody was shaken by his reasons, nor heated by his fanaticism. Being disappointed, he went into Persia. Sapor caused him to be put to death ; yet his disciples made profelytes. Dioclesian, informed that there were disciples of Manés in the empire, condemned the chiefs to death ; but the Manetists still increased. Exiles and torments were uselessly employed, for

* Manés was born in Persia. in 240. He was bought, when young, by a woman of Ctesiphonte, who brought him up with care, and at her death left him her property. Manés found, among the books of his benefactress, those of a man of the name of Scythian, who supposed the world to be the production of two opposite principles, one essentially good, the other essentially bad, &c. Manés adopted the ideas of Scythian, translated his books, made some alterations in them, and gave the system of Scythian as his own work.

‘ upwards

‘ upwards of six hundred years, against this sect
 ‘ and from the blood of these wretches sprung a power
 ‘ hostile to religion and the empire, and which was for
 ‘ a long time pernicious to both ; it hastened the con-
 ‘ quests of the Saracens, the aggrandisement of Maho-
 ‘ metanism, and the ruin of the empire.’—*Dictionnaire
 des Hérésies*, tom. II. p. 276, &c.

Vol. II. page 86.

(24.) Blaise Pascal was born in Auvergne, in the year 1623 ; son of a president of the Court of Aids, appointed to the intendance of Rouen in 1640. His eighteen Lettres Provinciales (say the authors of the *Dictionnaire Historique*) ‘ are a mixture of cunning
 ‘ pleasantries and of violent and sublime satire. The
 ‘ best comedies of Moliere abound not with more wit,
 ‘ nor has Bossuet any thing more eloquent. Boileau
 ‘ looked upon this book, and with reason, as the most
 ‘ perfect work in prose in our language, &c *.

M. de Marmontel, who has just published an *Essai sur le Goût*, entirely adopts this judgment of the authors of the *Dictionnaire Historique*. *The first of the provincials* (says he) *were lessons for Moliere ; the last for Bossuet*. M. de Marmontel adds, that Pascal was the *apostle of taste ; that he seemed born to be the symbol, the living image of it*. He afterwards adds ; *it was from him that the age in which he lived learned to sift, if I dare use the expression, and purge the written language of the impurities of the usual tongue, and to chuse not only what was agreeable to the language of satire and comedy, but to that of high eloquence, and the more tempered style of sound philosophy*. This paragraph is in the work intituled *Essai sur le Goût*, page 402. The author, in the same essay, prays us to acknowledge that Port Royal and Pascal have greatly contributed to form the taste of the public. Nothing, undoubtedly, is more true ; and it is for this reason that the public are in a state to perceive to

* *Dict. Hist. par une Société de Gens de Lettres, article Pascal.*

what a degree certain works are ridiculously written, and devoid of taste.

It will readily be agreed, that Pascal was *the apostle, the symbol and living image of taste*; that he taught his age to sift and chuse the language, to purge it of impurities, &c. But every body will not believe it to be as probable, that without Montaigne we should not have had Pascal, as it is, that without Corneille we should not have had Racine. M. de Marmontel says also, that les Pensées de Pascal have taught succeeding philosophers what ought to be the purity and dignity of their language.

It is generally known, that the Pensées de Pascal are but the first sketch of a great work which he intended to compose. Waiting for the re-establishment of his health, to enable him to begin his work, he employed himself in collecting the materials. He meditated profoundly, and wrote with rapidity; and, for fear of losing his ideas, he confined himself to a clear explanation of the most difficult points, reserving for a future time the details, developements, and corrections. His health was declining; he could combine and reflect, but was not in a state to give a long and assiduous application. Nobody can write well without passing several successive hours in the closet. Pascal's genius produced without effort sublime ideas; meditation was not painful to him; but his pains and weakness did not permit him to write with care for a long time together; for which reason he did not give himself the trouble of composing upon one or more loose sheets; he wrote upon bits of paper of various dimensions and torn into strips; sometimes he marked them with references, but more frequently forgot to indicate them *. What admiration and astonishment do

* I saw in the library of the abbey de St. Germain des Prés this precious manuscript: all these stripes of paper are pasted upon parchment, in order to preserve them; not one of them is broader than the hand. I turned the book over; the writing is very difficult to read, there being several erasements, and some words omitted, which were supplied by the editors before the work was sent to the press.

we feel on reflecting, that this work of a dying man, these notes written with so much negligence and disorder, have nevertheless produced one of the finest compositions we have in our language ! But it is certainly not as perfectly written as Pascal could write : it is inconceivable that the style should in general be so noble and agreeable ; yet there are some inaccuracies ; and it seems to me that it is not in this work, but in *les Lettres Provinciales*, and in *Telemachus*, that *philosophers* might learn *what ought to be the purity of their language*.

Pascal died at Paris, 19th August 1662, at the age of thirty-nine years. His *Thoughts* were not collected and given to the public until after his death.

THE END.



C O N T E N T S.

V O L. I.

CHAP. I.	<i>Plan of the Work</i>	- -	Page 1
CHAP. II.	<i>Of the Existence of God, and of the Im-</i> <i>mortality of the Soul</i>	- - - -	3
CHAP. III.	<i>Of eternal Rewards and Punishments</i>		17
CHAP. IV.	<i>Of the Conversion of great Profligates</i>	- . - - -	32
CHAP. V.	<i>Of Grace ; and of Spiritual Blind-</i> <i>ness</i>	- - - - -	36
CHAP. VI.	<i>Of Original Sin</i>	- - -	45
CHAP. VII.	<i>Of the Mysteries</i>	- - -	51
CHAP. VIII.	<i>Reflections upon the Creation, and upon</i> <i>Providence</i>	- - - - -	54
CHAP. IX.	<i>Continuation of the preceding Chap-</i> <i>ter</i>	- - - -	66

CHAP.

C O N T E N T S.

CHAP. X. *Of the Necessity of Worship, of Revelation, and of the Prophecies* - - Page 73

CHAP. XI. *Of the Apostles and the Evangelists* 81

CHAP. XII. *Of the Holy Scriptures considered as a Proof of Religion; of the Morality, and of the Laws of Moses* - - - 86

CHAP. XIII. *Philosophical Precepts: Precepts contained in the Books of the Old Testament. Sublimity of the Evangelical Morality* - - 103

CHAP. XIV. *Of Religious and Philosophic Fanaticism* - - - 125

CHAP. XV. *Of Tolerance* - - - 136

C O N T E N T S.

V O L. II.

CHAP. XVI.	<i>Falsehoods, Contradictions, Insincerity, Inconsequence, &c. of the Detractors of Religion</i>	- - - -	Page 3
CHAP. XVII.	<i>Of Philosophical Pride</i>	-	25
CHAP. XVIII.	<i>Answers to some Objections made by Philosophers against Religion</i>	- -	31
CHAP. XIX.	<i>Of Christian Virtues</i>	- -	39
CHAP. XX.	<i>If we have a precise Idea of what a Philosopher is</i>	- - - -	47
CHAP. XXI.	<i>Of Philosophical Prejudices</i>	-	64
CHAP. XXII.	<i>Whether it be true, that the present Age has received many Lights from Modern Philosophy</i>	- - - -	72
CHAP. XXIII.	<i>Of the Respect which Princes owe to Religion; and of the Shortness of Life</i>	-	88
CHAP. XXIV.	<i>Recapitulation of the Duties of a Prince</i>	- - - -	93
NOTES	- - - -	-	97



